THE

VIVEKAMĀRTAṆḌA

OF GORAKṢANĀTHA

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

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॥ विवेकमार्तण्ड ॥

॥ viveka-mārtaṇḍa ॥

The Sun of Discernment[1]

1. Viveka-mārtaṇḍa (विवेकमार्तण्ड) *translates as the "Sun of Discernment." In Nātha yoga, viveka signifies direct, intuitive knowledge* (*jñāna*) *arising through samādhi, by which the Self* (*ātman*) *is 'discerned' from the non-Self* (*anātman*). *Mārtaṇḍa, a Vedic epithet of the sun, denotes the inner luminosity that awakens, ascends, and shines forth through yogic discipline. The title thus evokes viveka as a radiant inner sun that dispels avidyā* (*ignorance*) *and reveals the path to liberation* (*mokṣa*), *like the sun in the polar sky, once risen, it no longer sets. Mārtaṇḍa, literally "born of a dead egg," refers to the goddess Aditi's eighth son, who was cast aside as lifeless and later revived to become the sun, symbolising renewal from decay; the resurrection of consciousness, a resurrection from the dark tomb of the flesh, the eternal Self* (*Ātman*), *the eternal sun transcending the cyclical rising and setting of the sun of physical mortality* (*saṃsāra*).

श्री गुरुं परमानन्दं वन्दे स्वानन्द विग्रहम्।
यस्य संनिध्य मात्रेण चिदानन्दायते तनुः॥१॥

śrī guruṁ paramānandaṁ vande svānanda vigraham ।
yasya saṁnidhya mātreṇa cidānandāyate tanuḥ ॥1॥

1. I bow down to the Guru,[1] the one who dispels the darkness (of ignorance), the embodiment of self-derived bliss, who is the supreme bliss. By the mere presence of that one, the body becomes (pure) consciousness and bliss.

1. The yogī bows not out of ritual obligation but as an act of deep inner recognition. The Guru is not merely a guide, but the very embodiment (*vigraha*) *of that which the yogī seeks through meditation and self-discipline, supreme bliss* (*paramānanda*) *arising from the Self* (*svānanda*). *By the Guru's mere presence* (*saṁnidhya mātreṇa*), *the yogī's body* (*tanuḥ*) *is transfigured into a state of consciousness and bliss* (*cidānanda*). *This is no ordinary reverence, it is the surrender of the seeker upon recognising the living ideal. In this bow, the yogī silently declares: "That which I seek, I behold before me."*

अन्तर्निश्चलितात्मदीपकलिका स्वाधारबन्धादिभिः।
यो योगी युगकल्पकालकलनात् संज्ञायते॥
ज्ञानामोदमहोदधिः समभवद्यत्रादिनाथः स्वयं।
व्यक्ताव्यक्तगुणाधिकं तमनिशं श्रीमीननाथं भजे॥२॥

antarniścalitātma-dīpa-kalikā svādhāra-bandhādibhiḥ |
yo yogī yuga-kalpa-kāla-kalanāt saṁjñāyate ||
jñānāmoda-mahodadhiḥ samabhavad yatrādināthaḥ svayam |
vyaktāvyakta-guṇādhikaṁ tam aniśaṁ śrī-mīnanāthaṁ bhaje ||2||

2. I ceaselessly worship Śrī Mīnanātha,[1] who surpasses both manifest and unmanifest qualities, in whom Ādinātha (the first Lord) himself became the vast ocean of the bliss of knowledge. He is

that yogī recognised through the measurement of cosmic time which spans yugas and kalpas,[2] whose inner self (Ātma) is like a steady flame of light, radiant and unwavering (like the full moon), established through practices such as binding the root centre (svādhāra-bandha) and others.

1. "Aniśaṁ śrī-mīnanāthaṁ bhaje" denotes ceaseless yogic practice, expressed through svādhāra-bandha, ethical observances, the haṁsa ajapā-gāyatrī (of the breath), kuṇḍalinī awakening with mudrās and bandhas, ultimately culminating in samādhi.

2. He is not a figure limited to human historical timelines, but one whose eternal reality spans cosmic ages.

नमस्कृत्य गुरुं भक्त्या गोरक्षो ज्ञानम् उत्तमम्।
अभीष्टं योगिनां ब्रूते परमानन्द कारकम्॥३॥

namaskṛtya guruṁ bhaktyā gorakṣo jñānam uttamam ।
abhīṣṭaṁ yogināṁ brūte paramānanda kārakam ॥3॥

3. Having reverently bowed down to his guru with devotion, Gorakṣa speaks of the supreme knowledge, which is cherished by yogins and which brings about the highest bliss.

एतद् विमुक्ति सोपानम् एतत् कालस्य वञ्चनम्।
यद् व्यावृत्तं मनो भोगादासक्तं परमात्मनि॥४॥

etad vimukti sopānam etat kālasya vañcanam ।
yad vyāvṛttaṁ mano bhogādāsaktaṁ paramātmani ॥4॥

4. This is the stairway to liberation. This is the deception of time. It is when the mind, having turned away from sensory enjoyment, becomes absorbed in the Supreme Self (Paramātman).

द्विजसेवितशाखस्य श्रुतिकल्पतरोः फलम्।
शमनं भव तापस्य योगं भजति सत्तमाः॥५॥

dvijasevitaśākhasya śrutikalpataroḥ phalam ।
śamanaṁ bhava tāpasya yogaṁ bhajati sattamāḥ ॥5॥

5. Yoga is the fruit of the Vedic wish-fulfilling tree, whose branches (śākhasya) are served by the twice-born. It brings about the cessation of suffering caused by worldly existence. The noblest ones devote themselves to this yoga.

आसनं प्राणसंरोधः प्रत्याहारश्च धारणा।
ध्यानं समाधिरेतानि योगाङ्गानि भवन्ति षट्॥६॥

āsanaṁ prāṇasaṁrodhaḥ pratyāhāraśca dhāraṇā ।
dhyānaṁ samādhiretāni yogāṅgāni bhavanti ṣaṭ ॥6॥

6. Remaining steady in seated posture, restraint of the breath, withdrawal of the senses, concentration, meditation, and complete absorption, these six are the limbs of yoga.

अहिंसा सत्यमस्तेयं ब्रह्मचर्यं क्षमा धृतिः।
दयार्जवं मिताहारः शौचं चैव यमा दश॥७॥

ahiṁsā satyamasteyaṁ brahmacaryaṁ kṣamā dhṛtiḥ ।
dayārjavaṁ mitāhāraḥ śaucaṁ caiva yamā daśa ॥ 7॥

7. Non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy, forgiveness, fortitude, compassion, sincerity, moderation in diet, and purity, these ten are the restraints (yamāḥ).

तपः सन्तोषास्तिक्यं दानमीश्वरपूजनम्।
सिद्धान्तश्रवणं चैव ह्रीमतिः च जपो हुतम्॥८॥

tapaḥ santoṣāstikyaṁ dānam īśvarapūjanam |
siddhāntaśravaṇaṁ caiva hrīmatiḥ ca japo hutam ||8||

8. Austerity, contentment, faith in the principles of truth, charity, worship of Īśvara,[1] and indeed, attentive listening to siddhānta, modesty, reverence, repetition of mantra,[2] and sacrificial offering,[3] these are the ten observances (niyamāḥ).

1. The word īśvara has a hidden meaning, to find it, one must break-up the Sanskrit compound to its syllables to reveal its true meaning: ईश्वर (īśvara) → ईश् (īś) + व (va) + र (ra) *"Master of the air (breath) possessing the motion of amorous (love) play (which) gives bright (shining) splendour (of the great light)."*

2. Chanting the mantra of the breath 'haṃsa.'

3. A metaphor employed to describe the sacrifice of the embodied ego (which melts away in the fire of yoga).

नियम अथ वक्ष्यामि योगमष्टाङ्गसंयुतम्।
सयोगं योगमित्याहुर्जीवात्मपरमात्मनोः॥९॥

niyama atha vakṣyāmi yogamaṣṭāṅgasaṁyutam ।
sayogaṁ yogamityāhurjīvātmaparamātmanoḥ ॥ 9 ॥

9. Now I shall explain the meaning of yoga, which is endowed with eight limbs. Yoga is said to be the union of the individual self (jīvātman) with the Supreme Self (paramātman).

1. The designation "eight-limbed" (aṣṭāṅga) asserted here, introduces an expansion beyond the six previously stated in verse 6, with the remaining two obliquely implied in the following verse ten through the language of saṃdhā-bhāṣā (see footnote 1 of verse 10)

आसनानि तु तावन्ति यावत्यो जीवजातयः।
एतेषामखिलान् भेदान् विजानाति महेश्वरः॥१०॥

āsanāni tu tāvanti yāvatyo jīvajātayaḥ ।
eteṣāmakhilān bhedān vijānāti maheśvaraḥ ॥10॥

10. The number of postures is said to be as many as the species of living beings. Among all of these, their full variety is known to Maheśvara.[1]

1. महेश्वर *(maheśvara) →* महा *(mahā), "the highest", which in this context alludes to* नृसिंह *(nṛsiṃha), "the one who assumes the celestial man-lion form" +* ईश्वर *(īśvara), refer back to footnote 1 of verse 8 for interpretation.*

A literary understanding of the lion's roar may be drawn from verses 51–53 of the सेकोद्देशः *(sekoddeśaḥ), attributed to mahāsiddha Nāropā.*

चतुराशीति लक्षाणां एकम् एकम् उदाहृतम्।
ततः शिवेन पीठानां षोडेशानं शतं कृतम्॥११॥

caturāśīti lakṣāṇāṁ ekam ekam udāhṛtam ।
tataḥ śivena pīṭhānāṁ ṣoḍeśānaṁ śataṁ kṛtam ॥11॥

11. Among the eighty-four lakhs[1] of postures, each has been individually spoken of. From these, Śiva established one hundred and sixteen pīṭhas.[2]

1. Eighty-four lakhs equals eight million four hundred thousand, an arbitrary number which serves to represent the countless postures of all beings who have ever lived.

2. The number 116 may not refer to a fixed geographical or anatomical enumeration of pīṭhas, but rather function symbolically. The sum of its digits (1 + 1 + 6 = 8) reflects the eight limbs (aṣṭāṅga) of yoga introduced previously in verse nine. Such numerological condensation is consistent with Nātha esotericism, where external multiplicity is reduced to inner unity under the realising power of Maheśvara (Śiva); for the hidden two (beyond the six limbs stated in verse 6), refer back to footnotes 1 of verses 8 and 10 respectively.

आसनेभ्यः समस्तेभ्यो द्वयम् एव प्रशस्यते।
एकं सिद्धासनं प्रोक्तं द्वितीयं कमलासनम्॥१२॥

āsanebhyaḥ samastebhyo dvayam eva praśasyate ।
ekaṁ siddhāsanaṁ proktaṁ dvitīyaṁ kamalāsanam ॥12॥

12. Among all the seated postures, only two are praised: the first is called siddhāsana (the posture of the perfected), and the second is kamalāsana (the lotus posture).

योनिस्थानकमङ्घ्रीमूलघटितं कृत्वा दृढं विन्यसेत्।
मेढ्रे पादमथैकमेव नियतं कृत्वा समं विग्रहम्।
स्थाणुः संयमितेन्द्रियश्चलदृशा पश्यन्भ्रुवोरन्तरम्।
एतन्मोक्षकवाटभेदजनकं सिद्धासनं प्रोच्यते॥१३॥

yoni-sthānakam aṅghrimūla-ghaṭitaṁ kṛtvā dṛḍhaṁ vinyaset |
meḍhre pādam athaikam eva niyataṁ kṛtvā samaṁ vigraham ||
sthāṇuḥ saṁyamitendriyaścaladṛśā paśyan bhruvor antaram |
etan mokṣa-kavāṭa-bheda-janakaṁ siddhāsanaṁ procyate ||13||

13. Placing the heel firmly against the perineum (yoni-sthāna), let one sit steadily, pressing the foot against the base of the body. Then, placing the (heel of the) other foot over the pubic region, keeping the body upright and steady, and fixing the gaze at the space between the eyebrows, with the senses restrained and the body immobile like a pillar,[1] this is called siddhāsana, the posture which breaks open the gate to liberation.

1. स्थाणुः (*sthāṇuḥ*), *"a post, stake, pillar, any fixed stationary object, a motionless figure; an epithet of Śiva, in his immobile, meditative form."*

वामोरूपरि दक्षिणं हि चरणं संस्थाप्य वामं तथा।
दक्षिणोरूपरि पश्चिमेन विधिना धृत्वा कराभ्यां दृढम्।
अङ्गुष्ठौ हृदये निधाय चिबुकं नासाग्रमालोकयेत्।
एतद्व्याधिविकारहारि यमिनां पद्मासनं प्रोच्यते॥१४॥

vāmorūpari dakṣiṇaṁ hi caraṇaṁ saṁsthāpya vāmaṁ tathā |
dakṣiṇorūpari paścimena vidhinā dhṛtvā karābhyāṁ dṛḍham ||
aṅguṣṭhau hṛdaye nidhāya cibukaṁ nāsāgram ālokayet |
etad vyādhi-vikāra-hāri yamināṁ padmāsanaṁ procyate ||14||

14. Placing the right foot upon the left thigh and likewise the left foot upon the right thigh, one should firmly grasp the feet with the hands in the traditional western method.[1] Having lowered the chin against the chest, one should gaze at the tip of the nose. This lotus posture, called Padmāsana, is said to remove diseases and disorders in those who are self-restrained.

1. The "western method" (paścimena vidhinā) is called padmāsana baddhāṁ (the "bound lotus posture"). This is performed by reaching both arms around behind the back, crossing them, and then bringing the hands forward around the opposite sides of the body to grasp the toes resting on the thighs in lotus posture.

आधारः प्रथमं चक्रं स्वाधिष्ठानं द्वितीयकम्।

तृतीयम् मणिपूराक्यं चतुर्थं स्यदनाहतम्॥१५॥

ādhāraḥ prathamaṁ cakraṁ svādhiṣṭhānaṁ dvitīyakam ।
tṛtīyam maṇipūrākyaṁ caturthaṁ syadanāhatam ॥15॥

15. Ādhāra is the first cakra, Svādhiṣṭhāna the second, the third is called Maṇipūra, and the fourth is known as Anāhata.

पञ्चमं तु विशुद्धाख्यमाज्ञाचक्रं तु षष्ठकम्।
सप्तमं तु महाचक्रं ब्रह्मरन्ध्रे महापथे॥१६॥

pañcamaṁ tu viśuddhākhyamājñācakraṁ tu ṣaṣṭhakam ।
saptamaṁ tu mahācakraṁ brahmarandhre mahāpathe ॥16॥

16. The fifth is called Viśuddha; the sixth is the Ājñā-cakra. The seventh is the great cakra located in the Brahmarandhra along the great path (of the suṣumṇā-nāḍī).

चतुर्दलं स्यादाधारः स्वाधिष्ठानं च षड्दलम्।
नाभौ दशदलं पद्मं सूर्यसङ्ख्यदलं हृदि॥१७॥

caturdalaṁ syādādhāraḥ svādhiṣṭhānaṁ ca ṣaḍdalam ।
nābhau daśadalaṁ padmaṁ sūryasaṅkhyadalaṁ hṛdi ॥ 17 ॥

17. The Ādhāra (mūlādhāra)[1] has four petals; the Svādhiṣṭhāna has six. At the navel is a lotus with ten petals, and at the heart, a lotus having a number of petals equal to that of the sun, twelve.[2]

1. The root of kuṇḍalinī which lies at the base of fire (the mūlādhāra).

2. The Sanskrit phrase "sūryasaṅkhyadalam" (सूर्यसंख्यदलम्) literally means "having petals equal to the number of the sun." While the numeral twelve (द्वादश, dvādaśa) is not explicitly stated, the sun is traditionally associated with the number twelve, referring to its passage through the twelve zodiac signs (rāśis) in Vedic cosmology and astrology. Hence, this is a well-established idiomatic expression meaning "twelve-petalled."

कण्ठे स्यात् षोडशदलं भ्रूमध्ये द्विदलं तथा।
सहस्रदलमाख्यातं ब्रह्मरन्ध्रे महापथे॥१८॥

kaṇṭhe syāt ṣoḍaśadalaṁ bhrūmadhye dvidalaṁ tathā ।
sahasradalamākhyātaṁ brahmarandhre mahāpathe ॥ 18 ॥

18. At the throat is the sixteen-petalled (lotus), and between the eyebrows is a lotus with two petals. The thousand-petalled (lotus) is said to be located at the Brahmarandhra, along the great

path.

आधारः प्रथमं चक्रं स्वाधिष्ठानं द्वितीयकम्।
योनिस्थानं तयोर्मध्ये कामरूपं निगद्यते॥१९॥

ādhāraḥ prathamaṁ cakraṁ svādhiṣṭhānaṁ dvitīyakam |
yoni-sthānaṁ tayor madhye kāma-rūpaṁ nigadyate ||19||

19. Ādhāra is the first cakra, Svādhiṣṭhāna is the second. Between the two lies the Yoni-sthāna, which is spoken of as the form of Kāma (the god of desire).[1]

1. By the mind in passion together with the spirit.

आधाराख्यं गुदस्थाने पङ्कजं च चतुर्दलम्।
तन्मध्ये प्रोच्यते योनिः कामाख्या सिद्धवन्दिता॥२०॥

ādhārākhyaṁ gudasthāne paṅkajaṁ ca caturdalam ।
tanmadhye procyate yoniḥ kāmākhyā siddhavanditā ॥20॥

20. The lotus named ādhāra, located in the place of the anus (guḍa), is born in the mud (paṅkajaṁ),[1] and has four-petals. In its centre is the yoni, known as Kāma (desire), revered by the perfected beings (siddhas).

1. Is born in the mud, like the rhizome of a lotus plant rooted in mud.

योनि मध्ये महा लिङ्गं पश्चिमाभिमुखं स्थितम्।
मस्तके मणिवद् बिम्बं यो जानाति स योगवित्॥२१॥

yoni madhye mahā liṅgaṁ paścimābhimukhaṁ sthitam ।
mastake maṇivad bimbaṁ yo jānāti sa yogavit ॥21॥

21. Within the yoni is the great liṅga, facing toward the western[1] (entrance of the suṣumnā). He who knows the (self-reflected) image shining like a jewel[2] at the crown of the head is a knower of yoga.[3]

1. East (pūrvam) often refers to the front of the body, and West (paścima) refers to the back of the body (in this instance, facing the lower entrance of the suṣumnā).

2. The Cintāmaṇi, which is स्थितम् *(sthitam) "placed standing" (unmoving and sparkling like the pole-star).*

3. For a literary description of this practice, see verses 140 and 141 of the Yogabījam of Gorakṣanātha.

तप्तचामीकराभासं तडिल्लेखेव विस्फुरत्।
त्रिकोणं तत्पुरंवह्नेरधो मेढ्रात्प्रतिष्ठितम्॥२२॥

taptacāmīkarābhāsaṁ taḍillekheva visphurat ।
trikoṇaṁ tatpuraṁvahneradho meḍhrātpratiṣṭhitam ॥22॥

22. Shining like molten gold and sparkling like a flash of lightning, the triangle, that place filled with fire, is established below the meḍhra (the male generative organ).

यत्समाधौ परं ज्योतिरनन्तं विश्वतो मुखम्।
तस्मिन् दृष्टे महा योगे यातायातं न विद्यते॥२३॥

yatsamādhau paraṁ jyotiranantaṁ viśvato mukham ।
tasmin dṛṣṭe mahā yoge yātāyātaṁ na vidyate ॥23॥

23. That supreme light, infinite and facing all directions, which is realised in samādhi, upon seeing it, in that great yoga, the cycle of coming and going ceases to exist.

दृष्टिः स्थिरा यस्य विनापि दृश्या द्वायुः स्थिरो यस्य विनापि यत्नात्।
मनः स्थिरं यस्य विनाबलम्बवात् स एव योगी स गुरूः स सेव्यः॥२४॥

dṛṣṭiḥ sthirā yasya vināpi dṛśyā vāyuḥ sthiro yasya vināpi yatnāt ।
manaḥ sthiraṁ yasya vināvalambavāt sa eva yogī sa gurūḥ sa sevyaḥ ॥ 24 ॥

24. He whose gaze is still even without (being fixed on) any object of sight, whose breath is still even without effort, and whose mind is still without reliance on support, he alone is a yogī, he is the guru, he is to be revered worthy of honour.[1]

1. अन्तर्लक्ष्यं बहिर्दृष्टिर्निमेषोन्मेषवर्जिता ।
एषा हि शाम्भवी मुद्रा सर्वतन्त्रेषु गोपिता ॥ १० ॥

antar lakṣyaṃ bahir dṛṣṭir nimeṣonmeṣavarjitā |
eṣā hi śāmbhavī mudrā sarvatantreṣu gopitā || 10 ||

10. When the object of focus[1] is within, while the gaze is outward, and (the eyes) are free from blinking, closing or opening; this indeed is the Śāmbhavī mudrā[2], kept secret[3] in all the tantras.

1. लक्ष्यम् (*lakṣyam*) *the mark, target, object* (*of attention or focus*). *The bullseye of the archer's target, the seed-star at the centre of the wheel of time.*

2. शाम्भवी (*śāmbhavī*) → *śām* (शाम्) *"to pacify or tranquillise (the mind)" + bha* (भ) *"a star", and also an epithet of śukra* (शुक्र) *"seminal essence, clear, bright, pure, radiant, shining, essence, light" + vī* (वी) *"to approach, pervade (across to), to obtain, to bring forth, to shine, to go away, to depart, to undergo change, to be diffused, to vanish, disappear, to cross over".*

3. गोपिता (*gopitā*) *protected, guarded, kept secret/hidden (from √gup/gop "to guard, protect").*

- Amanaska Yogaśāstra

स्वशब्देन भवेत्प्राणः स्वाधिष्ठानं तदाश्रयः।
स्वाधिष्ठानाश्रयस्तस्मान्मेढ्रमेवाभिधीयते॥२५॥

svaśabdena bhavetprāṇaḥ svādhiṣṭhānaṁ tadāśrayaḥ ।
svādhiṣṭhānāśrayastasmānmeḍhramevābhidhīyate ॥25॥

25. The (energy of the) breath (prāṇa) is designated by the word sva and resides in the svādhiṣṭhāna; since prāṇa is supported there, the svādhiṣṭhāna is therefore referred to as the meḍhra (the generative organ).[1]

1. Prāṇa (प्राण), *"the procreative life-force energy, heated, enflamed and lifted by the elemental power generated by the breath."*

तन्तुना मणिवत्प्रोतो यत्र कन्दः सुषुम्णया।
तन्नाभिमण्डले चक्रं प्रोच्यते मणिपूरकम्॥२६॥

tantunā maṇivatproto yatra kandaḥ suṣumṇayā ।
tannābhimaṇḍale cakraṁ procyate maṇipūrakam ॥26॥

26. Where the bulb (kanda) is strung like a jewel on a thread (tantu), by the Suṣumṇā (central channel), there at the navel region is the wheel (cakra) called the Maṇipūraka.

द्वादशारे महाचक्रे पुण्यपापविवर्जिते।
तावज्जीवो भ्रमत्येव यावत्तत्त्वं न विन्दति॥२७॥

dvādaśāre mahācakre puṇyapāpavivarjite ।
tāvajjīvo bhramatyeva yāvattattvaṁ na vindati ॥27॥

27. In the great wheel with twelve spokes, free from virtue and vice, the embodied soul keeps wandering until he finds the Truth.[1]

1. The dvādaśāra mahācakra (“great wheel of twelve spokes”) is interpreted in Nātha yoga as the subtle nerve-centre (cakra) located at the kanda near the navel, from which twelve primary nāḍīs radiate. This structure forms the energetic basis of the jīva’s (the energy generated by the breaths) dispersion throughout the body via the subtle channels. The wheel is described as puṇyapāpavivarjita (“free from virtue and vice”) because it is not karmically determined, but rather the neutral field through which the soul remains bound in cyclical existence (saṁsāra). Liberation occurs when the outward dispersion of prāṇa and awareness is reversed through yogic practice, allowing the jīva to realise tattva (Truth) and ascend through the suṣumṇā.

ऊर्ध्वं मेढ्रादधो नाभेः कन्दयोनिः खगाण्डवत्।
तत्र नाड्यः समुत्पन्नाः सहस्राणि द्विसप्ततिः॥२८॥

ūrdhvaṁ meḍhrādadho nābheḥ kandayoniḥ khagāṇḍavat ।
tatra nāḍyaḥ samutpannāḥ sahasrāṇi dvisaptatiḥ ॥28॥

28. Above the genitals and below the navel is the bulbous source called the kanda, like the egg of a bird. From there arise the nāḍīs, seventy-two thousand in number.

तेषु नाडि सहस्रेषु द्विसप्ततिरुदाहृताः।
प्रधानः प्राणवाहिन्यो भूयस्तासु दशस्मृताः॥२९॥

teṣu nāḍi sahasreṣu dvisaptatirudāhṛtāḥ ।
pradhānaḥ prāṇavāhinyo bhūyastāsu daśasmṛtāḥ ॥29॥

29. Among those thousands of nāḍīs, seventy-two are named. Of these, ten are chiefly remembered as the principal prāṇa-carriers.

इडा च पिङ्गला चैव सुषुम्णा च तृतीयका।
गान्धारी हस्ति जिह्वा च पूषा चैव यशस्विनी॥३०॥

iḍā ca piṅgalā caiva suṣumṇā ca tṛtīyakā ।
gāndhārī hasti jihvā ca pūṣā caiva yaśasvinī ॥30॥

30. Iḍā, piṅgalā, and also suṣumṇā, the third; gāndhārī, hastijihvā, pūṣā, and likewise yaśasvinī.

अलम्बुषा कुहूश्चैवशङ्खिनी दशमी स्मृता।
एतन्नाडिमयं चक्रं ज्ञातव्यं योगिभिः सदा॥३१॥

alambuṣā kuhūścaivaśaṅkhinī daśamī smṛtā ।
etannāḍimayaṁ cakraṁ jñātavyaṁ yogibhiḥ sadā ॥31॥

31. Alambusā, Kuhū, and indeed Śaṅkhinī, these complete the ten, as they are remembered.

This cakra (system), consisting of nāḍīs (channels), is to be known by yogis always.

इडा वामे स्थिता भागे दक्षिणे पिङ्गला स्मृता।
सुषुम्णा मध्यदेशे तु गान्धारी वामचक्षुषि॥३२॥

iḍā vāme sthitā bhāge dakṣiṇe piṅgalā smṛtā ।
suṣumṇā madhyadeśe tu gāndhārī vāmacakṣuṣi ॥32॥

32. Iḍā is situated on the left side, and piṅgalā is laid down on the right. The suṣumṇā is in the central region, and gāndhārī[1] is at the left eye.

1. Gāndhārī, surrounding the iḍā nadi extends from the pāda (karmendriya - the larynx) and ends in the left eye (netra). - International Ayurvedic Medical Journal (page 1574, Issue 9, September 2019. ISSN: 2320 5091).

दक्षिणे हस्तिजिह्वा च पूषा कर्णे च दक्षिणे।
यशस्विनी वाम कर्ण आनने चाप्यलम्बुषा॥३३॥

dakṣiṇe hastijihvā ca pūṣā karṇe ca dakṣiṇe ।
yaśasvinī vāma karṇaṁ ānane cāpyalambuṣā ॥33॥

33. On the right (eye) is hastijihvā,[1] and pūṣā is at the right ear. yaśasvinī is at the left ear, and alambuṣā is also at the mouth (ānane).[2]

1. Hastijihvā, surrounding the piṅgalā nadi extends from the pāda (karmendriya - the larynx) and ends in the right eye (netra). - International Ayurvedic Medical Journal (page 1574, Issue 9, September 2019. ISSN: 2320 5091).

2. The term ānane in this verse denotes "at/in the mouth" or "in the face," indicating the general orifice region of the oral cavity. In practical anatomical terms, alambuṣā corresponds to an opening in the region of the upper soft palate above the uvula, located within the nasopharyngeal region, the nasopharyngeal isthmus connecting the oral and nasal pharynx.

कुहूश्च लिङ्ग देशे तु मूलस्थाने च शङ्खिनी।
एवं द्वारम् समश्रित्य तिष्ठन्ति दशनाडयः॥३४॥

kuhūśca liṅga deśe tu mūlasthāne ca śaṅkhinī ।
evaṁ dvāram samaśritya tiṣṭhanti daśanāḍayaḥ ॥34॥

34. Kuhū is situated in the region of the generative organ, and Śaṅkhinī at the root position (of the perineum). Thus, in this manner, with their outlets accordingly, the ten nāḍīs (subtle channels) are established.

इडा च पिङ्गला चैव सुषुम्णा प्राणसंश्रिताः।
सततं प्राणवाहिन्यः सोमसूर्याग्निदेवताः॥३५॥

iḍā ca piṅgalā caiva suṣumṇā prāṇasaṁśritāḥ ।
satataṁ prāṇavāhinyaḥ somasūryāgnidevatāḥ ॥35॥

35. Iḍā, Piṅgalā, and indeed the Suṣumṇā are sustained by the life-breath. Always carrying the life-force, they are presided over by the deities of the Moon, the Sun, and Fire.

प्राणोपानः समानश्चोदानो तथैव च।
नागः कूर्मोथ कृकरो देवदत्तो धनञ्जयः॥३६॥

prāṇopānaḥ samānaścodāno tathaiva ca ।
nāgaḥ kūrmotha kṛkaro devadatto dhanañjayaḥ ॥36॥

36. Prāṇa, apāna, and samāna, and likewise udāna, as well as nāga, kūrma, kṛkara, devadatta, and dhanañjaya.

प्राणाद्याः पञ्चविख्याता नागाद्याः पञ्च वायवः।
हृदि प्राणो वसेन्नित्यमपानो गुदमण्डले॥३७॥

prāṇādyāḥ pañcavikhyātā nāgādyāḥ pañca vāyavaḥ ।
hṛdi prāṇo vasennityamapāno gudamaṇḍale ॥37॥

37. Prāṇa and the others[1] are the five well-known (vital airs), and nāga and the others[2] are the five (secondary) airs. Prāṇa dwells always in the heart, and apāna in the region of the anus.

1. Prāṇa, apāna, samāna, udāna, vyāna.

2. Nāga, kūrma, kṛkara, devadatta, dhanañjaya.

समानो नाभिदेशे स्यादुदानः कण्ठदेशगः।
व्यानो व्यापी शरीरे तु प्रधानाः पञ्चवायवः॥३८॥

samāno nābhideśe syādudānaḥ kaṇṭhadeśagaḥ ।
vyāno vyāpī śarīre tu pradhānāḥ pañcavāyavaḥ ॥38॥

38. Samāna is in the region of the navel, udāna is situated in the region of the throat, and vyāna pervades the body. These are the five principal (vital) airs.

उद्गारे नाग आख्यातः कूर्म उन्मीलने स्मृतः।
कृकरः क्षुतके ज्ञेयो देवदत्तो विजृम्भणे॥३९॥

udgāre nāga ākhyātaḥ kūrma unmīlane smṛtaḥ ।
kṛkaraḥ kṣutake jñeyo devadatto vijṛmbhaṇe ॥39॥

39. Nāga is named in connection with belching, kūrma is said to be in the opening of the eyes, kṛkara is to be known in sneezing, and devadatta in yawning.

न जहाति मृतं चापि सर्वव्यापि धनञ्जयः।
एते नाडीषुसहस्रेषु वर्तन्ते जीवरूपिणः॥४०॥

na jahāti mṛtaṁ cāpi sarvavyāpi dhanañjayaḥ ।
ete nāḍīṣusahasreṣu vartante jīvarūpiṇaḥ ॥40॥

40. Dhanañjaya, all-pervading, does not even leave the body of the dead. These (winds) dwell in the thousands of nāḍīs, having the form of the life-principle.[1]

1. Jīva-rūpiṇaḥ, the ten vāyus exist as expressions of the vital force that keeps the body alive, moving through the thousands of nāḍīs. Here, jīva (जीव) "spirit", is the energy of the "breath".

आक्षिप्तो भुज दण्डेन यथोच्चलति कन्दुकः।
प्राणापानसमाक्षिप्तस्तथा जीवो न तिष्ठति॥४१॥

ākṣipto bhuja daṇḍena yathoccalati kandukaḥ ।
prāṇāpānasamākṣiptastathā jīvo na tiṣṭhati ॥41॥

41. Just as a ball, struck by the swing of an arm, bounces away, so too the spirit,[1] propelled by the combined forces of the prāṇa and apāna breaths, does not remain still.[2]

1. In the context of this verse, jīva (जीव) is best understood not as "living being" in the general sense, but as the breath-energy within the body. Jīva (जीव) translates as "spirit", which is cognate with the Latin, spiritus: "air, breath, breathing." More succinctly, it refers here to the energy generated by the breath.

2. The breath-energy (jīva) is constantly propelled by the push-and-pull of prāṇa (the upward current) and apāna (the downward current). This makes it inherently restless, it cannot remain still.

प्राणापानवशो जीवो हृयश्चोर्ध्वं च धावति।
वामदक्षिणमार्गेण चञ्चलत्वान्न दृश्यते॥४२॥

prāṇāpānavaśo jīvo hyaścordhvaṁ ca dhāvati ।
vāmadakṣiṇamārgeṇa cañcalatvānna dṛśyate ॥42॥

42. Governed by prāṇa and apāna, the spirit moves swiftly upward and downward, passing through the left and right channels; so restless is it that it cannot be seen (or perceived).[1]

1. Governed by prāṇa and apāna, the breath-energy rushes upward and downward through the left and right nāḍīs (iḍā and piṅgalā). Its speed and instability make it unobservable to ordinary perception.

रज्जुबद्धो यथा श्येनो गतोऽप्याकृष्यते पुनः।
गुणबद्धस्तथा जीवः प्राणापानेन कृष्यते॥४३॥

rajjubaddho yathā śyeno gato'pyākṛṣyate punaḥ।
guṇabaddhastathā jīvaḥ prāṇāpānena kṛṣyate ॥43॥

43. Just as a falcon, though it has flown away, is dragged back when tethered by a cord, so the breath-energy,[1] bound by the guṇas, is (forcibly) dragged by prāṇa and apāna.[2]

1. Here, jīva (जीव) "spirit", is the energy of the "breath".

2. The breath energy, bound by the guṇas (physical effects of material qualities), subject to prāṇa and apāna, is forcibly dragged back into cyclical movement in the left and right channels. It cannot yet move freely into the suṣumṇā.

अपानः कर्षति प्राणः प्राणोपानं च कर्षति।
ऊर्ध्वाधः संस्थितावृ एतौ संयोजयति योगवित्॥४४॥

apānaḥ karṣati prāṇaḥ prāṇopānaṁ ca karṣati ।
ūrdhvādhaḥ saṁsthitāv etau saṁyojayati yogavit ॥44॥

44. Apāna draws upon prāṇa, and prāṇa likewise draws upon apāna. These two, established above and below, the knower of yoga unites.[1]

1. This verse shifts the focus from describing the restless, bound state (vv. 41–43) to the yogic method for release. Which the one skilled in yoga, deliberately brings prāṇa and apāna into union. Instead of each pulling in opposition, they are harmonised, creating the conditions for their joint ascent through the suṣumṇā, which is the next stage in the practice.

हकारेण बहिर्याति सकारेण विशेत् पुनः।
हंसहंसेत्यृं मन्त्रं जीवो जपति सर्वदा॥४५॥

hakāreṇa bahiryāti sakāreṇa viśet punaḥ ।
haṁsahaṁsetyṁ mantraṁ jīvo japati sarvadā ॥45॥

45. With the syllable ha it goes out; with the syllable sa it enters again. Thus, the breath-energy repeats the mantra "haṁsa, haṁsa" constantly.[1]

1. The falcon metaphor (vv. 41–43) illustrates the jīva (breath-energy) in its untrained state, tethered by the guṇas and pulled by the opposing currents of prāṇa and apāna in the iḍā and piṅgalā. Initially, the falcon resists the tether, its movement erratic and restless. With yogic discipline (v. 44), these forces are united, and the falcon no longer struggles against the pull but aligns its flight with the cord's reach, a metaphor for the conscious coordination of prāṇa and apāna. In v. 45, the tether itself is recognised as a mantra: each pull of the breath becomes a syllable (ha on exhalation, sa on inhalation), forming haṁsa. What was once experienced as bondage is now perceived as a sacred link to the boundless, transforming the cycle of breath from a mark of limitation into a vehicle for liberation.

The restless falcon is no longer dragged against its will; instead, its flight is aligned with its tether, and the tether itself is recognised as a mantra linking it to the boundless.

षट्शतानि दिवारात्रौ सहस्राण्येक विंशतिः।
एतत्सङ्ख्यान्वितं मन्त्र जीवो जपति सर्वदा॥४६॥

ṣaṭśatāni divārātrau sahasrāṇyeka viṁśatiḥ ।
etatsaṅkhyānvitaṁ mantra jīvo japati sarvadā ॥46॥

46. In every day and night, twenty-one thousand and six hundred, this is the number of times the breath-energy repeats the mantra, unceasingly.[1]

1. 10,800 inhalations of sa, and 10,800 exhalations of ha, together making 21,600 haṁsa mantras per day, performed naturally by the jīva (energy of the "breath") without conscious effort.

This verse expresses the principle of the yogin as microcosm of the macrocosm, a theme recurrent in Indian cosmological and yogic literature. The haṁsa mantra, articulated in every breath as 'ha' (exhalation) and 'sa' (inhalation), is said to occur 21,600 times daily (vv. 45–47), corresponding to the divisions of the cosmic day. The yogin's respiration thus enacts the revolution of time itself, linking bodily rhythm with cosmic rhythm. In this way, yoga becomes the re-enactment of the three cosmic functions—creation (manifestation of breath and form), preservation (circulation of prāṇa), and dissolution (suspension in kumbhaka). The body is thereby construed as a mirror and stage for the universe, an enactment of the larger order within the microcosm of the human frame.

अजपा नाम गायत्री योगिनां मोक्ष दायिनी।
अस्याः सङ्कल्प मात्रेण नरः पापैर्विमुच्यते॥४७॥

ajapā nāma gāyatrī yogināṁ mokṣa dāyinī ।
asyāḥ saṅkalpa mātreṇa naraḥ pāpairvimucyate ॥47॥

47. The gayatrī[1] called ajapā[2] grants liberation to yogins; by the mere resolve to practise it, a man is freed from his sins.

1. Here, the breath-mantra haṁsa is likened to the Gāyatrī, "Song":

ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः ।
तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं
भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि ।
धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

oṁ bhūr bhuvaḥ svaḥ ।
tat savitur vareṇyaṁ
bhargo devasya dhīmahi ।
dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt ॥

Aum, the Earth, the Atmosphere, and the Heaven.
That adorable radiance of Savitṛ,[*]
the divine splendour of the god, we meditate upon.
May he inspire and guide our intellects.

** Savitṛ, the solar deity as the divine impeller, the life-giver and awakener of the intellect."*

2. अजपा (*ajapā*), *"unrecited" (from a- "not" + japa "repetition, muttering"), referring to the spontaneous mantra of the breath.*

अनया सदृशो विद्या अनया सदृशो जपः।
अनया सदृशं ज्ञानं न भूतं न भविष्यति॥४८॥

anayā sadṛśo vidyā anayā sadṛśo japaḥ ।
anayā sadṛśaṁ jñānaṁ na bhūtaṁ na bhaviṣyati ॥48॥

48. No knowledge is comparable with this; no recitation (of mantra) is comparable with this.
Wisdom like this has never existed before, nor will it ever exist (anywhere else).

अनया सदृशं तीर्थमनया सदृशः क्रतुः।
अनया सदृशं पुण्यं न भूतं न भविष्यति॥४९॥

anayā sadṛśaṁ tīrthamanayā sadṛśaḥ kratuḥ ।
anayā sadṛśaṁ puṇyaṁ na bhūtaṁ na bhaviṣyati ॥49॥

49. No sacred place is comparable with this; no sacred rite is comparable with this.
Merit like this has never existed before, nor will it ever exist (anywhere else).

अनया सदृशो स्वर्गो अनया सदृशो तपः।
अनया सदृशं वेद्यम् न भूतं न भविष्यति॥५०॥

anayā sadṛśo svargo anayā sadṛśo tapaḥ ।
anayā sadṛśaṁ vedyam na bhūtaṁ na bhaviṣyati ॥50॥

50. No heaven is comparable with this; no austerity is comparable with this.

Knowledge to be known like this has never existed before, nor will it ever exist (anywhere else).

कुन्दलिन्याः समुद्भूता गायत्री प्राणधारिणी।
प्राणविद्या महाविद्या यस्तां वेत्ति स योगवित्॥५१॥

kundalinyāḥ samudbhūtā gāyatrī prāṇadhāriṇī ।
prāṇavidyā mahāvidyā yastāṁ vetti sa yogavit ॥51॥

51. From Kuṇḍalinī arises the Gāyatrī, the sustainer of life-breath.
She is the knowledge of prāṇa, the great wisdom; he who knows her is a knower of yoga.

प्रस्फुरद् भुजगाकारा पद्मतन्तुनिभा शुभा।
मूढ़ानां बन्धिनि सास्ति योगिनां मोक्षदायिनो॥५२॥

prasphurad bhujagākārā padmatantunibhā śubhā ।
mūḍhānāṁ bandhini sāsti yogināṁ mokṣadāyino ॥ 52 ॥

52. She has the form of a shining serpent, resembling the filament of a lotus, and is auspicious.[1]
For the deluded, she is a bond;[2] for yogins, she is the giver of liberation.

1. She is "auspicious" because, for the yogin, her awakening leads to mokṣa (liberation).

2. The "deluded," unaware of how to practise prāṇāyāma, remain bound by the breath's inability to awaken, lift, and straighten the dormant procreative life-force (Kuṇḍalī Śakti), which, coiled like a knot, remains tethered at the base of the spine.

"Her sleep in the Mūlādhāra, is, therefore, for the bondage of the ignorant." – Chapter I, Śāṇḍilya Upaniṣad.

कन्दोर्ध्वं कुण्डली शक्तिरष्टधा कुटिलाकृति।
ब्रह्मद्वारमुखं नित्यं मुखेनाच्छाद्य तिष्ठति॥५३॥

kandordhvaṁ kuṇḍalī śaktiraṣṭadhā kuṭilākṛti ।
brahmadvāramukhaṁ nityaṁ mukhenācchādya tiṣṭhati ॥53॥

53. Above the pelvic region, the coiled power, eightfold in her twisted form,
ever remains covering the mouth of the door of Brahma with her face.

येन मार्गेण गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मस्थानमनामयम्।
मुखेनाच्छाद्य तद्द्वारं प्रसुप्ता परमेश्वरी॥५४॥

yena mārgeṇa gantavyaṁ brahmasthānamanāmayam ।

mukhenācchādya taddvāraṁ prasuptā parameśvarī ॥54॥

54. The path that leads to the place of Brahma, free from every affliction, she, the Supreme Lady (kuṇḍalī), sleeps there, her face covering its door.

प्रबुद्धा वह्निनयोगेन मनसा मारुतै सहः।
सूचीव गुणमादाय व्रजत्यूर्ध्वं सुषुम्णया॥५५॥

prabuddhā vahniyogena manasā mārutai sahaḥ ।
sūcīva guṇamādāya vrajatyūrdhvaṁ suṣumṇayā ॥55॥

55. Awakened through union with the fire, with the mind and with the vital airs, she (Kuṇḍalinī), like a needle taking up a thread, goes upward by way of the suṣumṇā.

उद्घटयेत् कपातं तु यथा कुञ्चिकया हठात्।
कुण्डलिन्या तथा योगी मोक्षद्वारं प्रभेदयेत्॥५६॥

udghaṭayet kapātaṁ tu yathā kuñcikayā haṭhāt ।
kuṇḍalinyā tathā yogī mokṣadvāraṁ prabhedayet ॥56॥

56. Just as one forcibly opens a door with a key, so the yogin, with Kuṇḍalinī, should break open the door of liberation.[1]

1. The "door of liberation" (mokṣa-dvāra) here is the same subtle gateway as the "door of Brahma" (brahma-dvāra) mentioned in verses 53–54, located at the base of the suṣumṇā nāḍī.

कृत्वा सम्पुटितौ करौ दृढतरं बद्ध्वा तु पद्मासनं
गाढं वक्षसि सन्निधाय चिबुकं ध्यात्वा च तच्चेतसा।
वारं वारमपानमूर्ध्वमनिलंप्रोच्चारयेत् पूरयन्
मुञ्चन् प्राणमुपैतिबोधमतुलं शक्तिप्रबोधान्नरः॥५७॥

kṛtvā sampuṭitau karau dṛḍhataraṁ baddhvā tu padmāsanaṁ
gāḍhaṁ vakṣasi sannidhāya cibukaṁ dhyātvā ca taccetasā ।
vāraṁ vāramapānamūrdhvamanilaṁproccārayet pūrayan
muñcan prāṇamupaitibodhamatulaṁ śaktiprabodhānnaraḥ ॥57॥

57. Placing the two hands cupped together,[1] and assuming the lotus posture, pressing the chin firmly against the chest and fixing the mind on that,[2] again and again one should draw the apāna upward, by filling with the breath; by releasing the prāṇa (up the suṣumṇā), a man attains incomparable awakening through the arousing of the śakti.

1. This is ध्यानमुद्रा (*dhyānamudrā*), the "*meditation hand-gesture*" *which is performed by placing the two hands cupped together; the wrists are relaxed, one hand is cupped and placed resting on top of the upturned cupped palm of the other, and the thumbs lightly touch at their tips, forming an upward pointing triangle* (*ūrdhva-trikoṇa*).*

** In the haṭha-yoga subtle body practice, the apex-up triangle represents fire* (*agni*), *whose natural motion is upward. The upward triangle is an instruction to reverse the flow: to drive the seminal essence* (*bindu*) *upward from the mūlādhāra toward the sahasrāra. This is the viparīta-karāṇī principle, inversion of the normal downward apāna flow. It marks the sublimation phase of haṭha-yoga, when the yogin transforms reproductive fluid into ojas through inner heat. Some Nātha diagrams of haṭha-yoga place the upward triangle at the ājñā-cakra during khecarī-mudrā, visualising fire and light rising through the suṣumṇā.*

N.B. The upward-pointing triangle's tip symbolises the suṣumṇā, the lower left angle, the iḍā, and lower right angle, the piṅgalā, their union forming the triangle signifies kuṇḍalinī's ascent.

2. Seated in the lotus position, the hands in dhyānamudrā, with the pads of the thumbs touching, which naturally relaxed in meditation, fall forward; the yogin with his chin pressed against his chest looking downwards sees a sharp triangle formed by the space within his thumbs: this is where he should fix the mind, on the ūrdhva-trikoṇa.

अङ्गानां मर्दनं कृत्वा श्रमसञ्जातवारिणा।
कट्वम्ललवणत्यागीक्षीरभोजनमादिशेत्॥५८॥

aṅgānāṁ mardanaṁ kṛtvā śramasañjātavāriṇā ।
kaṭvamlalavaṇatyāgīkṣīrabhojanamādiśet ॥58॥

58. After massaging the limbs and bathing with water produced by the exertion,
one should avoid bitter, sour, and salty foods, and subsist on a diet of milk.[1]

1. This verse is written in the Nāth secret language of saṃdhā-bhāṣā (*the "twilight language"*), *deliberately concealing its esoteric meaning. Here, the "diet of milk" is symbolic, referring to the nectar* (*amṛta*) *gathered through khecarī-mudrā. Its true sense is disclosed later, in verses 140–151, where this "diet of milk," the avoidance of "bitter, sour, and salty foods," and the "massaging of the limbs and bathing with water produced by exertion" are explained in detail.*

ब्रह्मचारी मिताहारी त्यागी योगपरायणः।
अब्दादूर्ध्वं भवेत्सिद्धो नात्र कार्या विचारणा॥५९॥

brahmacārī mitāhārī tyāgī yogaparāyaṇaḥ ।
abdādūrdhvaṁ bhavetsiddho nātra kāryā vicāraṇā ॥59॥

59. He who is celibate, moderate in diet, a renunciate, and devoted to the practice of yoga becomes accomplished within a year; in this fact, there is no need for further consideration.

सुस्निग्धमधुराहारं चतुर्थांशविवर्जितम्।
भुङ्क्त य इश्वरप्रीत्यै मिताहारि स उच्यते॥६०॥

susnigdhamadhurāhāraṁ caturthāṁśavivarjitam ।
bhuṅkt ya iśvaraprītyai mitāhāri sa ucyate ॥60॥

60. He who eats well-oiled and sweet food, leaving a fourth part of the stomach empty, and partakes for the pleasure of the Lord is called moderate in diet.[1]

1. This verse, while ostensibly defining mitāhāra (“moderation in diet”) in terms of wholesome food habits, is again composed in the Nāth saṃdhā-bhāṣā (“intentional” or “twilight language”), a form of double speech in which the uninitiated hears “eat wholesome food in moderation,” but a Nāth adept hears “drink amṛta through khecarī with restraint and dedication.” In this esoteric register, “unctuous and sweet food” (su-snigdha-madhura-āhāra) refers not to literal food but to the amṛta-soma, the pure, milk-like, ghee-like nectar described in verses 140–151 as dripping from the ṣoḍaśa-patra-padma (“sixteen-petalled lotus”) at the crown. This essence, drawn upward by prāṇic force and accessed via khecarī mudrā, is said to be su-vimala (“very pure”), miṣṭa (“sweet”), and the destroyer of disease and old age.

The phrase “devoid of one-fourth part” (caturthāṁśa-vivarjitam) is most plausibly an instruction to retain a portion of the nectar so that it does not descend into the digestive fire (jāṭharāgni), where its potency would be lost. By keeping part of the amṛta in the cranial and upper spinal channels, it continues to nourish the subtle body. “For the pleasure of the Lord” (īśvara-prītyai) signals the dedication of this preservation to Śiva, the haṃsa principle of verses 144–146, ensuring the act is one of spiritual offering rather than sensual indulgence.

Thus mitāhārī (“moderate in intake”) here denotes the adept who regulates not only physical food but also prāṇic and nectar intake, consuming it in precise measure, at the right time, and for the right purpose. For beginners, the verse functions as an outer injunction on diet; for initiates, it is an encoded instruction on the measured reception of the immortal essence.

The phrase īśvara-prītyai (“for the pleasure of the Lord”) connects directly to the inner haṃsa ajapā-gāyatrī practice described in verse 146, in which inhalation is associated with sa and exhalation with ha, forming the natural mantra haṃsa (“swan”), a symbol of both the individual soul and of Śiva in Nāth yoga. In the khecarī context, the act of “partaking” (bhuṅkt), whether understood outwardly as eating or inwardly as absorbing nectar, is synchronised with this uninterrupted inner recitation. Each breath-cycle thereby becomes an offering to īśvara, with the intake performed not for personal gratification but as a devotional act in harmony with the life-breath. Seen in this light, “for the pleasure of the Lord” is not merely a pious phrase but a technical instruction to integrate khecarī mudrā, nectar absorption, and haṃsa ajapā into a single continuous sādhanā.

महामुद्रां नभोमुद्रामुड्डियानं जलन्धरम्।
मूलबन्धं च यो वेत्ति स योगी सिद्धिभाजनम्॥६१॥

mahāmudrāṁ nabhomudrāmuḍḍiyānaṁ jalandharam ।
mūlabandhaṁ ca yo vetti sa yogī siddhibhājanam ॥61॥

61. He who knows the Mahāmudrā, the Nabho-mudrā,[1] the Uḍḍiyāna, the Jālandhara, and the Mūlabandha is a yogin fit to be the receptacle of accomplishments.

1. Nabho (नभो), “in the sky,” and (mudra) gesture here derives from Latin gerō, “to carry, to bear, to conduct,” i.e., “to conduct and bear she (śakti) who (moves) in the sky.” Here it is synonymous with Mahāmudrā, the supreme khecarī mudrā, the powerful up-and-down churning of the sublimated life-force (kuṇḍalinī), driven upward into the Brahmā cavity until the solid “liṅga of energy” rises beyond the skull, releasing a fountain-like abhiṣeka. It is the conducting and bearing

of śakti who moves in the sky.

अपानप्राणयोरैक्ये क्षयोमूत्रपुरीषयोः।
युवा भवति वृद्धोऽपि सततं मूलबन्धनात्॥६२॥

apānaprāṇayoraikye kṣayomūtrapurīṣayoḥ ।
yuvā bhavati vṛddho'pi satataṁ mūlabandhanāt ॥ 62 ॥

62. When the apāna and prāṇa are united, there is the cessation of urine and faeces; even an old man becomes young through constant practice of Mūlabandha.

पार्ष्णिभागेनसंपीड्य योनिमाकुञ्चयेद् गुदम्।
अपानमूर्ध्वमाकृष्य मूलबन्धो निगद्यते॥६३॥

pārṣṇibhāgenasaṁpīḍya yonimākuñcayed gudam ।
apānamūrdhvamākṛṣya mūlabandho nigadyate ॥ 63 ॥

63. Pressing the yoni[1] with the heel and contracting the anus, drawing the apāna upward, this is called the Mūlabandha.

1. The perineum. In this verse, "pressing the yoni" signifies sealing the mūlādhāra region to prevent the downward escape of bindu (vital essence) and to reverse the flow of apāna. The contraction of the anus (guda) and the upward draw of apāna unite it with prāṇa, initiating the ascent of kuṇḍalinī through the central channel (suṣumṇā). This union, described in verse 62, is essential for halting decay by the collection of the internal nectar stream (amṛta) in the cranial vault, from which it is "drunk" in khecarī mudrā, a process completed by the application of the other mudrās and bandhas named in verse 61.

उड्डीनं कुरुते यस्मादविश्रान्तो महाखगः।
उड्डीयानं तदेव स्यान्मृत्युमातङ्गकेसरी॥६४॥

uḍḍīnaṁ kurute yasmādaviśrānto mahākhagaḥ ।
uḍḍīyānaṁ tadeva syānmṛtyumātaṅgakesarī ॥ 64 ॥

64. Because by it the great bird flies up without fatigue, it is called Uḍḍīyāna, the lion to the elephant of death.[1]

1. In saṃdhā-bhāṣā, the inverted head of the defeated elephant laying dead upside-down on the ground resembles the human pelvis with the spine rising from it, with its open, limp and down-stretched ears resembling the pelvic bowl, and the spinal column the "trunk." In yogic practice, this image encodes the reversal of energy flow, the "great bird" (mahā-khagaḥ) is prāṇa itself, soaring upward once apāna is subdued. In yogic practice, this image encodes the reversal of energy flow, apāna overcome and drawn upward through the suṣumṇā, culminating in the "lion's roar" of victory!

उदरात्पश्चिमे भागे ह्यधो नाभेर्निगद्यते।
उड्डीयानाह्वयो बन्धस्तत्र बन्धो विधीयते॥६५॥

udarātpaścime bhāge hyadho nābhernigadyate ।
uḍḍīyānāhvayo bandhastatra bandho vidhīyate ॥ 65 ॥

65. In the posterior part of the abdomen, just below the navel, there is said to be a lock (bandha) known as Uḍḍīyāna; in that place, this lock is to be applied.[1]

1. Uḍḍīyāna-bandha, is the abdominal lock applied below the navel, drawing the belly inward and upward toward the spine, drawing the apāna upward from its seat below the navel to join prāṇa in the suṣumṇā, initiating the upward flight of the "great bird" (prāṇa) described in verse 64. This lock reverses the downward current and begins the process of elemental withdrawal (saṃhāra), enabling the ascent toward the cranial vault, and the "lion's roar" of liberation!

बध्नाति हि सिरोजालं नाधो याति नभोजलम्।
ततो जालन्धरो बन्धः कण्ठे दुःखौघनाशकः॥६६॥

badhnāti hi sirojālaṁ nādho yāti nabhojalam ।
tato jālandharo bandhaḥ kaṇṭhe duḥkhaughanāśakaḥ ॥ 66 ॥

66. For it binds the network of vessels, and the water of the sky does not flow downward; therefore, the Jālandhara bandha at the throat is the destroyer of the multitude of sufferings.[1]

1. The "network of vessels" (siro-jāla) refers to the subtle channels at the throat that act as the gateway between the upper and lower currents. The "water of the sky" (nabho-jalam) is the amṛta dripping from the lunar centre above. Without Jālandhara bandha, this nectar flows downward to be consumed by the digestive fire, leading to decay. By sealing the throat, the yogin prevents its descent, holding it in the cranial vault for absorption through khecarī mudrā. This is the act of placing a "dam" in the river of life, halting the outflow and reversing the current, a direct method for cutting off the "flood of sufferings" that it causes; old age, sickness and death.

जालन्धरे कृते बन्धे कण्ठसंकोचलक्षणे।
पीयूषं न पतत्यग्नौ न च वायुः प्रकुप्यति॥६७॥

jālandhare kṛte bandhe kaṇṭhasaṁkocalakṣaṇe ।
pīyūṣaṁ na patatyagnau na ca vāyuḥ prakupyati ॥ 67 ॥

67. When the Jālandhara bandha is applied, marked by the contraction of the throat, the nectar does not fall into the fire, nor does the wind become disturbed.[1]

1. The nectar" (pīyūṣa), is the amṛta dripping from the lunar sphere at the crown, while "fire" (agni) refers to the digestive fire at the navel (maṇipūra-cakra) that consumes it when allowed to descend. The "wind" (vāyuḥ) is prāṇa, which can be disturbed by uncontrolled movement or loss of bindu. By the throat's contraction in Jālandhara bandha, the yogin creates a seal that both preserves the upward nectar and stabilises prāṇa, preventing turbulence in the central channel

(*suṣumṇā*). *This is the damming of the upper reservoir, so that the life-giving waters neither spill into the consuming fires below nor are scattered by the restless winds, an essential step in drinking the immortal essence through khecarī mudrā.*

कपालकुहरे जिह्वा प्रविष्टा विपरीतगा।
भ्रुवोरन्तर्गता दृष्टिर् मुद्रा भवति खेचरी॥६८॥

kapālakuhare jihvā praviṣṭā viparītagā ।
bhruvorantargatā dṛṣṭir mudrā bhavati khecarī ॥ 68 ॥

68. When the tongue, moving in reverse, enters the cavity of the skull, and the gaze is fixed within between the brows, the mudrā becomes Khecarī.[1]

1. In the esoteric reading, the "cavity of the skull" (kapāla-kuhara) refers to the nasopharyngeal vault beyond the soft palate, the inner "sky" where amṛta gathers. The "tongue moving in reverse" is the practice of khecarī mudrā, curling the tongue back and up to enter this cavity, sealing it and accessing the nectar stream from the crown. The "gaze fixed within between the brows" (bhruvor antargatā dṛṣṭiḥ) aligns the inner vision with the ājñā-cakra, directing awareness inward and upward. This describes uniting the upward-flowing prāṇa and the mind's vision in the inner sky, allowing the yogin to "move in the space" of pure consciousness while drinking the immortal essence.

चित्तं चलति खे यस्माज्जिह्वा चरति खे गता।
तेनैव खेचरी मुद्रा सर्वसिद्धैर्नमस्कृता॥६९॥

cittaṁ calati khe yasmājjihvā carati khe gatā ।
tenaiva khecarī mudrā sarvasiddhairnamaskṛtā ॥ 69 ॥

69. Because the mind moves in the sky and the tongue moves in the sky, for that reason, the Khecarī mudrā is revered by all accomplished ones.[1]

1. In the esoteric sense, "sky" (kha) is both the external ether and the inner ākāśa of the cranial vault. When the tongue (jihvā) "moves in the sky" it is curled up into this space via khecarī mudrā; when the mind (citta) "moves in the sky" it is absorbed in the inner void of pure consciousness. The two movements are united: the physical act of sealing the nasopharyngeal cavity and drinking amṛta coincides with the mental act of withdrawing awareness into the inner sky (ākāśa). Reverence by "all accomplished ones" (sarva-siddha) indicates its recognition across yogic traditions as a direct means of attaining mastery over prāṇa, bindu, and mind.

न रोगो मरणं तस्य न निद्रा न क्षुधा तृषा।
न च मूर्च्छा भवेत्तस्य यो मुद्रां वेत्ति खेचरीम्॥७०॥

na rogo maraṇaṁ tasya na nidrā na kṣudhā tṛṣā ।
na ca mūrcchā bhavettasya yo mudrāṁ vetti khecarīm ॥ 70 ॥

70. He who knows the Khecarī mudrā has no disease, no death, no sleep, no hunger, no thirst, and no fainting.[1]

1. This is not mere hyperbole, but a technical description of physiological and pranic changes induced by Khecarī mudrā. By sealing the nasopharyngeal cavity and drawing awareness into the inner sky, the yogin halts the downward loss of amṛta, stabilises prāṇa, and suspends normal metabolic demands. Hunger and thirst are diminished because prāṇa nourishes the body directly; sleep is reduced as consciousness remains absorbed; disease and aging are slowed by the preservation and "drinking" of the nectar. The "no death" clause signifies mastery over the life-force, prolonging life and transcending identification with the body.

पीड्यते न च शिकेन लिप्यते न च कर्मणा।
बाध्यते न स केनापि यो मुद्रां वेत्ति खेचरीम्॥७१॥

pīḍyate na ca śikena lipyate na ca karmaṇā ।
bādhyate na sa kenāpi yo mudrāṁ vetti khecarīm ॥ 71 ॥

71. He who knows the Khecarī mudrā is not oppressed by the topknot, is not tainted by action, and is not hindered by anyone.[1]

1. The topknot" (śikhā) symbolises sectarian identity, and "action" (karma) the binding force of cause and effect. The adept of khecarī mudrā, having gathered prāṇa, bindu, and mind into the inner sky, is beyond both; his acts leave no karmic residue, and no power, worldly or divine, can hinder or hold him down on the earthly plane of existence.

बिन्दुमूल शरीरणां शिरास्तत्र प्रतिष्ठिताः।
भावयन्ति शरीराणि चापादतलमस्तकम्॥७२॥

bindumūla śarīraṇāṁ śirāstatra pratiṣṭhitāḥ ।
bhāvayanti śarīrāṇi cāpādatalamastakam ॥ 72 ॥

72. The veins of the bodies have their root in the bindu, and there they are established; they animate the bodies from the soles of the feet to the crown of the head.[1]

1. In Nāth esoteric language, bindu here is not merely "a drop" or "point," but the lunar essence, the amṛta-soma, residing in the bindu-viśarga at the crown. It is the subtle seed of vitality, the source from which the network of śirāḥ (nāḍīs, prāṇic channels) originates and into which they ultimately return.

These "veins" are the conduits of prāṇa and ojas, animated by the bindu's presence. "Established there" (tatra pratiṣṭhitāḥ) means their true life-source is not the gross heart or brain, but the subtle lunar reservoir above.

From the soles (apāda-talam) to the crown (mastakam), the living body is sustained by this constant, though usually unconscious, downward flow. In khecarī mudrā and allied practices, this current is reversed: bindu is preserved, prāṇa is lifted upward through the suṣumṇā, and the body is vivified from above rather than drained from below.

Thus, this verse encodes the secret that all life in the body is a function of how bindu is managed, either allowed to descend and be consumed, leading to aging, sickness and death, or gathered and "drunk" at the source, leading to rejuvenation and liberation.

खेचर्या मुद्रितं येन विवरं लम्बिकोर्ध्वतः।
न तस्य क्षरते बिन्दुः कामिन्यालिङ्गितस्य च॥७३॥

khecaryā mudritaṁ yena vivaraṁ lambikordhvataḥ ।
na tasya kṣarate binduḥ kāminyāliṅgitasya ca ॥ 73 ॥

73. He by whom the opening of the passage above the lambikā is sealed with khecarī, his bindu does not trickle down, even when embraced by a loving woman.[1]

1. The "opening above the lambikā" refers to the nasopharyngeal gate into the cranial vault. Khecarī mudrā "seals" this point, preventing the downward loss of bindu (seminal essence), the lunar essence, through the throat into the digestive fire. Even in circumstances of strong sensory stimulation (symbolised by "embraced by a lover"), the yogin retains bindu by maintaining the upward prāṇa-apāna union in the suṣumṇā. This verse encodes the yogic mastery whereby physical passion no longer causes loss of vital essence, ensuring preservation of life-force and stability of mind.

यावद् बिन्दुः स्थितो देहे तावन्मृतोर्भयं कुतः।
यावद् बद्धा नभोमुद्रा तावद् बिन्दुर्न गच्छति॥७४॥

yāvad binduḥ sthito dehe tāvanmṛtorbhayaṁ kutaḥ ।
yāvad baddhā nabhomudrā tāvad bindurna gacchati ॥ 74 ॥

74. As long as the bindu remains established in the body, how can there be fear of death? As long as the Nabho-mudrā is applied, the bindu does not depart.

1. Nabho-mudrā here is synonymous with khecarī mudrā, in which the tongue seals the nasopharyngeal gate above the lambikā, preventing bindu from descending into the digestive fire. This verse makes the link explicit: death's approach begins when bindu departs; thus, as long as khecarī is maintained and bindu is "held in the sky" (nabhas), the yogin remains beyond the reach of death.

चलितोऽपि यदा बिन्दुः सम्प्राप्तश् च हुताशनम्।
व्रजत्यूर्ध्वं हृतः शक्त्या निरुद्धो योनिमुद्रया॥७५॥

calito'pi yadā binduḥ samprāptaś ca hutāśanam ।
vrajatyūrdhvaṁ hṛtaḥ śaktyā niruddho yonimudrayā ॥ 75 ॥

75. Even when the bindu has moved and reached the fire, it goes upward when seized by the power and restrained by the Yoni-mudrā.[1]

1. The "fire" (hutāśana) is the digestive fire (jaṭharāgni) at the navel that consumes descending amṛta. If bindu begins to fall toward this fire, the awakened śakti seizes it and yoni-mudrā seals the mūlādhāra, reversing apāna's flow. The bindu is then driven back upward through the suṣumṇā for preservation in the cranial vault, preventing its loss and sustaining vitality.

स पुनर्द्विविधो बिन्दुः पण्डुरो लोहितस्तथा।
पाण्डुरः शुक्रमित्याहुर्लोहितां च महाराजः॥७६॥

sa punardvividho binduḥ paṇḍuro lohitastathā ।
pāṇḍuraḥ śukramityāhurlohitāṁ ca mahārājaḥ ॥ 76 ॥

76. The bindu is of two kinds: white and red. The white, they say, is semen; the red is the great rajas.[1]

1. In Nāth yoga, the "white bindu" (pāṇḍura śukra) is the lunar essence residing in the bindu-viśarga at the crown, while the "red bindu" (lohita mahā-rajas) is the solar essence rooted at the mūlādhāra. These are not merely physical semen and menstrual fluid, but the subtle polar principles, "śiva and śakti," whose union produces the nectar of immortality (amṛta). The yogin's work is to preserve, unite, and elevate these essences through mudrā, bandha, and prāṇic control, rather than allowing them to dissipate downward into the fires of decay.

सिन्दूरद्रवसङ्काशं राविस्थाने स्थितं रजः।
शशिस्थाने स्थितो बिन्दुस्तयोरैक्यं सुदुर्लभम्॥७७॥

sindūradravasaṅkāśaṁ rāvisthāne sthitaṁ rajaḥ ।
śaśisthāne sthito bindustayoraikyaṁ sudurlabham ॥ 77 ॥

77. The rajas, resembling liquid vermilion, is situated in the place of the sun; the white essence, bindu is situated in the place of the moon. The union of these two is exceedingly difficult to obtain.[1]

1. The "place of the sun" (ravi-sthāna) is the mūlādhāra at the base of the spine, the seat of the red essence (rajas), radiant and heating, likened here to liquid vermilion. The "place of the moon" (śaśi-sthāna) is the bindu-viśarga at the cranial vault, the seat of the white essence (bindu), cooling and luminous. In ordinary life these two remain far apart, their currents flowing in opposite directions, rajas downward and bindu likewise descending to be consumed. The "union of the two" (tayor aikyam) is called raja-bindu saṅgama, and is considered su-durlabham, exceedingly rare, because it demands complete mastery over prāṇa, apāna, and the senses, sustained by mudrā, bandha, and undivided absorption.

बिन्दुः शिवो रजः शक्तिर्बिन्दुरिन्दू रजो रविः।
उभयोः सङ्गमादेव प्राप्यते परमं पदम्॥७८॥

binduḥ śivo rajaḥ śaktirbindurindū rajo raviḥ ।
ubhayoḥ saṅgamādeva prāpyate paramaṁ padam ॥ 78 ॥

78. Bindu is Śiva, and rajas is śakti; bindu is the moon, and rajas is the sun. From the union of the two alone is the supreme state attained.

वायुना शक्तिचारेण प्रेरितं तु यदा रजः।
याति बिन्दोः सहैकत्वं भवेद्दिव्यं वपुस्तदा॥७९॥

vāyunā śakticāreṇa preritaṁ tu yadā rajaḥ ।
yāti bindoḥ sahaikatvaṁ bhaveddivyaṁ vapustadā ॥ 79 ॥

79. When the rajas, drawn upwards by the movement of Śakti through the wind (prāṇa), joins in oneness with the bindu, then the body becomes divine.[1]

1. Here rajas (the red essence, Śakti) is drawn upward from the mūlādhāra by śakti-cāra by the flowing current of prāṇa, as described in verses 43–45. When it unites with bindu (the white essence, Śiva) at the crown, their saṅgama floods the body with amṛta, producing the divya vapuḥ, a body sustained from above, illuminated and beyond decay.

शुक्रं चन्द्रेण संयुक्तं रजः सूर्येण संगतम्।
तयोः समरसैकत्वं यो जानाति स योगवित्॥८०॥

śukraṁ candreṇa saṁyuktaṁ rajaḥ sūryeṇa saṁgatam ।
tayoḥ samarasaikatvaṁ yo jānāti sa yogavit ॥ 80 ॥

80. The śukra united with the moon, and the rajas united with the sun, he who knows their single essence in perfect balance is a knower of yoga.

शोधनं नाडिजालस्य चालनं चन्द्रसूर्ययोः।
रसानाशोषणं कुर्यान्महामुद्राभिधीयते॥८१॥

śodhanaṁ nāḍijālasya cālanaṁ candrasūryayoḥ ।
rasānāśoṣaṇaṁ kuryānmahāmudrābhidhīyate ॥ 81 ॥

81. The purification of the network of channels, the stimulation of the moon and sun, and the drying up of the fluids,[1] this is called the Mahāmudrā.

1. The "drying up of the fluids" signifies halting the downward loss of bindu and reversing its current through the suṣumṇā.

वक्षोन्यस्तहनुः प्रोपिड्यसुचिरं योनिं च वमाङ्घ्रणा
हस्ताभामनुधारयेत्प्रसरितं पादं तथ दक्षिणम्।
आपूर्य श्वसनेन कुक्षियुगलं बध्वा शनैः रेचये
देषा व्याधिविनाशिनी च महतो मुद्रा नृणां प्रोच्यते॥८२॥

vakṣonyastahanuḥ propiḍyasuciraṁ yoniṁ ca vamāṅghraṇā
hastābhāmanudhārayetprasaritaṁ pādaṁ tatha dakṣiṇam ।
āpūrya śvasanena kukṣiyugalaṁ badhvā śanaiḥ recaye
deṣā vyādhivināśinī ca mahato mudrā nṛṇāṁ procyate ॥ 82 ॥

82. Placing the chin upon the chest, firmly pressing the perineum with the left heel, holding the extended right foot with both hands, filling the two sides of the abdomen with the breath and then exhaling slowly, this, is called the Mahāmudrā, and is the destroyer of diseases in men.[1]

1. Verse 82 omits uḍḍīyāna-bandha, naming only mūlabandha and jālandhara. Haṭha practice most often adds uḍḍīyāna between the two previous bandhas to enhance the upward prāṇa-apāna flow.

N.B. The 11th century text of the amṛtasiddhi (chapters 11, 12, and 13) goes into great detail into the practice of mahāmudrā, "the great seal", mahābandha, "the great lock", and mahāvedha, "the great piercing".

*The amṛtasiddhi is 'essential reading', and should not be missed. See: The Amṛtasiddhi and Amṛtasiddhimūla: The Earliest Texts of the Haṭhayoga Tradition. Critically edited and translated by James Mallinson and Péter-Dániel Szántó. Published by, Institut français de Pondichéry / Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient (2021). Collection Indologie 150, Haṭha Yoga Series 2. Institut Français de Pondichéry, 2021 (ISBN 978-81-8470-242-2) & École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2021 (ISBN 978-2-85539-245-5). **

** Further, in this same regard, verses 50-67 of the Gorakṣaśataka should also be on your essential reading list. Look out for Professor Mallinson's forthcoming publication of the Gorakṣaśataka.*

चन्द्राङ्गेन समभ्यस्य सूर्याङ्गेनाभ्यसेत्पुनः।
यावत्तुल्या भवेत्संख्या ततो मुद्रां विसर्जयेत्॥८३॥

candrāṅgena samabhyasya sūryāṅgenābhyasetpunaḥ ।
yāvattulyā bhavetsaṁkhyā tato mudrāṁ visarjayet ॥ 83 ॥

83. Practise with the moon-side, then with the sun-side, until the number (of times) is equal; then release the mudrā.[1]

1. Candrāṅga ("moon-side") and sūryāṅga ("sun-side") here refer to the two leg positions in Mahāmudrā: first, the left leg extended with the right heel pressing the perineum (moon-side), then the right leg extended with the left heel pressing the perineum (sun-side). The verse instructs alternating sides, keeping the duration and repetitions (saṁkhyā) equal for each, before releasing the posture.

न हि पथ्यमपथयं वा रसाः सर्वेऽपि नीरसाः।
अपि भुक्तं विषं घोरं पियूषमिवजिर्यति॥८४॥

na hi pathyamapathayaṁ vā rasāḥ sarve'pi nīrasāḥ ।
api bhuktaṁ viṣaṁ ghoraṁ piyūṣamivajiryati ॥ 84 ॥

84. For the flavours, whether wholesome or unwholesome, all become without taste; even poison, though terrible, is digested like nectar.[1]

1. For the perfected yogin, all foods, whether wholesome or unwholesome, become harmless; even deadly poison is assimilated like nectar. This recalls Śiva as Nīlakaṇṭha, who held the halāhala in his throat during the churning of the ocean. In yogic practice, this "throat" is sealed by jālandhara bandha and khecarī mudrā, preventing either nectar (pīyūṣa) or poison from descending into the digestive fire below. "Poison" signifies the downward-pulling forces of decay, passion, and karmic residue. By holding these suspended in the viśuddha cakra, the yogin does not expel or suppress them but

transforms them, reversing their flow into the suṣumṇā. In this way, the very substance that binds ordinary beings to death becomes the source of vitality and liberation.

क्षयकुष्ठगुदावर्तगुल्माजीर्णप्रिगमाः।
तस्य रोगाः क्षयं यान्ति महामुद्रांतु योऽभ्यसेत्॥८५॥

kṣayakuṣṭhagudāvartagulmājīrṇaprigamāḥ ।
tasya rogāḥ kṣayaṁ yānti mahāmudrāṁtu yo'bhyaset ॥ 85 ॥

85. Consumption, leprosy, retention of stool, abdominal lumps, indigestion, enlargement of the spleen, and other such ailments, these diseases waste away in the one who practises the Mahāmudrā.[1]

1. Mahāmudrā is said to cure such varied ailments because, in yogic physiology, they are traced to blockages or imbalances in prāṇa within the abdominal and pelvic regions. The posture combines mūlabandha, jālandhara bandha, and a deep forward bend, compressing and stretching the digestive organs, massaging the spine, and stimulating the nāḍī network. This simultaneously locks and redirects apāna upward to unite with prāṇa, clearing stagnation and harmonising internal flows, these "diseases" symbolise obstructions in the suṣumṇā; the "cure" is the restored, unobstructed ascent of life-force.

कथितेयं महामुद्रा महासिद्धिकरी नृणाम्।
गोप्नीया प्रयत्नेन न देया यस्य कस्यिचत्॥८६॥

kathiteyaṁ mahāmudrā mahāsiddhikarī nṛṇām ।
gopnīyā prayatnena na deyā yasya kasycit ॥ 86 ॥

86. This Mahāmudrā, the great-bestower of siddhis for men, has been spoken. It is to be kept hidden with effort, and not to be given to just anyone.

पद्मासनं समारुहय समकायशिरोधरः।
नासाग्रदृष्टिरेकान्ते जपेदोङ्कारमव्ययम्॥८७॥

padmāsanaṁ samāruhya samakāyaśirodharaḥ ।
nāsāgradṛṣṭirekānte japedoṅkāramavyayam ॥ 87 ॥

87. Having seated himself in the lotus posture, keeping the body and head upright, with the gaze fixed on the tip of the nose, in a solitary place,[1] one should repeat the imperishable syllable Oṃ.[2]

1. The Unmanī (उन्मनी) "transmental" state.

2. The instruction to "repeat the imperishable syllable Oṃ" refers not to the verbal or mental japa, but to resting in the eternal inner nāda, the unstruck sound and luminous consciousness that Oṃ represents.

भूर्भुवः स्वरिमे लोकाः सोमसूर्याग्निदेवताः।
प्रतिष्ठिता यत्र सदा तत्परं ज्योतिरोमिति॥८८॥

bhūrbhuvaḥ svarime lokāḥ somasūryāgnidevatāḥ ।
pratiṣṭhitā yatra sadā tatparaṁ jyotiromiti ॥ 88 ॥

88. The worlds Bhūḥ, Bhuvaḥ, and Svaḥ, and the deities Soma, Sūrya, and Agni, are ever established where that supreme light "Oṃ" is.

1. Bhūḥ, Bhuvaḥ, Svaḥ are not distant realms but the three inner worlds, the physical, the vital, and the mental; while Soma, Sūrya, and Agni are the moon-nectar above, the sun-heat below, and the transformative fire between. All are "ever established" in the one source, the supreme light of Oṃ, which here means the unstruck sound (anāhata-nāda) and luminous consciousness. In this state, the worlds and their gods dissolve into a single radiance, and the yogin abides in it.

त्रयः कालास्त्रयो वेदास्त्रयो लोकास्त्रयः स्वराः।
त्रयो देवाः स्थिता यत्र तत्परं ज्योतिरोमिति॥८९॥

trayaḥ kālāstrayo vedāstrayo lokāstrayaḥ svarāḥ ।
trayo devāḥ sthitā yatra tatparaṁ jyotiromiti ॥ 89 ॥

89. The three times,[1] the three Vedas,[2] the three worlds,[3] the three tones,[4] and the three gods[5] are established where that supreme light "Oṃ" is.[6]

1. The three divisions of time, past (atīta), present (vartamāna), and future (anāgata), represent not only chronological sequence but also the mental constructs binding perception. In the light of Oṃ, these dissolve into the timeless present.

2. The three Vedas, Ṛg, Yajur, and Sāma, symbolise the totality of revealed knowledge: Ṛg as praise and vision, Yajur as ritual and action, and Sāma as song and harmony. In the supreme Oṃ, their distinct functions merge into one undifferentiated truth.

3. The three worlds: Bhūḥ (physical), Bhuvaḥ (vital), and Svaḥ (mental), are the inner planes: Bhūḥ is the physical (sthūla śarīra, waking state), grounded in elements and bodily sense-experience; Bhuvaḥ is the vital (sūkṣma śarīra, dreaming state), the realm of prāṇa, emotion, and subtle sensation; Svaḥ is the mental/causal (kāraṇa śarīra, deep-sleep state), the realm of pure ideation and archetype. In yogic ascent, these dissolve into the supreme light of Oṃ, where all planes are unified.

4. The three Vedic tones: udātta (high pitch), anudātta (low pitch, usually preceding an udātta), and svarita (the falling tone, a glide from high to low, often following an udātta), are the primordial sound modulations of Sanskrit recitation, embodying the vibratory structure of creation itself. In Oṃ, these converge into the unstruck sound (anāhata-nāda).

5. The three primary deities, Brahmā (creation), Viṣṇu (preservation), and Śiva (dissolution), are the personifications of the cosmic functions: sṛṣṭi (creation), sthiti (preservation), and saṁhāra (dissolution/destruction). In the state of Oṃ, their apparent roles dissolve, revealing them as one.

6. Taken together, the "three times," "three Vedas," "three worlds," "three tones," and "three gods" form a complete map of manifest existence: the dimensions of time, the totality of revealed knowledge, the planes of being, the vibratory structure

of sound, and the governing cosmic functions (Brahmā, creation; Viṣṇu, preservation; and Śiva, dissolution). In the supreme light of Oṃ, these are no longer perceived as separate domains but as facets of one reality. For the yogin in samādhi, they dissolve into the timeless, soundless, undivided consciousness symbolised by Oṃ, where all multiplicity is resolved into a single luminous presence.

सत्त्वं रजस्तमश्चाव ब्रह्मविष्णुमहेश्वराः।
त्रयो देवाः स्थिता यत्र तत्परं ज्योतिरोमिति॥९०॥

sattvaṁ rajastamaścāiva brahmaviṣṇumaheśvarāḥ ।
trayo devāḥ sthitā yatra tatparaṁ jyotiromiti ॥ 90 ॥

90. Sattva, rajas, and tamas, and the three gods: Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, are established where that supreme light "Oṃ" is.

कृतिरिच्छा तथा ज्ञानां ब्राह्मी रौद्री च वैष्णवी।
त्रिधा शक्तिः स्थिता यत्र तत्परं ज्योतिरोमिति॥९१॥

kṛtiricchā tathā jñānāṁ brāhmī raudrī ca vaiṣṇavī ।
tridhā śaktiḥ sthitā yatra tatparaṁ jyotiromiti ॥ 91 ॥

91. Action, will, and knowledge, the Brāhmī, Raudrī, and Vaiṣṇavī, these threefold powers are established where that supreme light "Oṃ" is.[1]

1. Icchā-śakti (will), kriyā-śakti (action), and jñāna-śakti (knowledge) are the three fundamental powers, here called Brāhmī, Vaiṣṇavī, and Raudrī. Icchā is the upward pull of aspiration (ūrdhva-vṛtti), the resolve that focuses prāṇa and steadies the mind; kriyā is that will in motion through mudrā, bandha, and prāṇāyāma, sustaining the ascent of energy; jñāna is the illuminative awareness that dissolves the distinction between doer, deed, and goal. In the state of the supreme light "Oṃ," these three powers are no longer experienced as separate drives, but as one pulsation of consciousness, will is action, action is knowledge, and knowledge is will, the indivisible energy at the heart of creation, preservation, and dissolution.

शुचिर्वाप्यशुचिर्वापि यो जपेत् प्रणवं सदा।
न स लिप्यति पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा॥९२॥

śucirvāpyaśucirvāpi yo japet praṇavaṁ sadā ।
na sa lipyati pāpena padmapatramivāmbhasā ॥ 92 ॥

92. Whether pure or impure, whoever always recites the praṇava (Oṁ) is not tainted by sin, just as a lotus leaf is not wetted by water.[1]

1. The metaphor of the lotus leaf is crucial: even though the lotus leaf grows in water, its surface repels moisture, so droplets roll away without soaking in. In the same way, the yogin established in Oṁ moves through the world of action, experience, and karma, yet these cannot cling to or penetrate their consciousness. In yogic terms, this happens because the praṇava draws the mind back into its source, the supreme light, where karmic impressions cannot take hold. So, this verse is not just

about mantra repetition as a ritual act, but the mantra of the breath, where inhalation carries the subtle sound sa, exhalation ha; together these form the natural mantra haṁsa or so'haṁ, which in deep absorption merges into the continuous inner vibration of Oṁ, and abiding in the vibration and awareness of Oṁ until the "water" of worldly entanglement can no longer wet the "leaf" of the self.

चले वाते चलं चित्तं निश्चले निश्चल भवेत्।
योगी स्थाणुत्वमाप्नोति ततो वायुं निरोधयेत्॥९३॥

cale vāte calaṁ cittaṁ niścale niścala bhavet ।
yogī sthāṇutvamāpnoti tato vāyuṁ nirodhayet ॥ 93 ॥

93. When the breath moves, the mind is restless; when it is still, the mind becomes still. (By kumbhaka) the yogin becomes steady like a pillar; therefore, he should restrain the breath.

यावद् बद्धो मरुद्देहे तावच्चित्तं निरामयम्।
यावद् दृष्टिर्भ्रुवोर्मध्ये तावन्मृत्युभयं कुतः॥९४॥

yāvad baddho maruddehe tāvaccittaṁ nirāmayam ।
yāvad dṛṣṭirbhruvormadhye tāvanmṛtyubhayaṁ kutaḥ ॥ 94 ॥

94. As long as the breath is bound in the body,[1] the mind remains free from disturbance; as long as the gaze is fixed between the eyebrows, how can there be fear of death?

1. Binding the breath (marut baddha) in the body, is kumbhaka.

यावद् वायुः स्थितो देहे तावज्जीवो न मुच्यते।
मरणं तस्य निष्क्रान्तिस्ततो वायुं निरोधयेत्॥९५॥

yāvad vāyuḥ sthito dehe tāvajjīvo na mucyate ।
maraṇaṁ tasya niṣkrāntistato vāyuṁ nirodhayet ॥ 95 ॥

95. As long as the breath remains in the body, the life-force does not depart, its departure is death, therefore, the breath should be restrained.

अतः कालभयाद् ब्रह्मा प्राणायामपरायणः।
योगिनो मुनयः सर्वे ततो वायुं निरोधयेत्॥९६॥

ataḥ kālabhayād brahmā prāṇāyāmaparāyaṇaḥ ।
yogino munayaḥ sarveṁ tato vāyuṁ nirodhayet ॥ 96 ॥

96. Therefore, from fear of (the effects of) time (that ends in death), Brahmā was devoted to prāṇāyāma. All yogis and sages, therefore, should likewise restrain the breath.

शुद्धिमेति यदा सर्वं नाडीचक्रं मलाकुलम्।
तदैव जायते योगी क्षमः प्राणनियन्त्रणे॥९७॥

śuddhimeti yadā sarvaṁ nāḍīcakraṁ malākulam ।
tadaiva jāyate yogī kṣamaḥ prāṇaniyantraṇe ॥ 97 ॥

97. When the entire network of nāḍīs, filled with impurities, becomes purified;
then indeed the yogi becomes capable in breath-control.

बद्धपद्मासनो योगी प्राणं चन्द्रेण पूरयेत्।
धारयित्वा यथाशक्ति पुनः सूर्येण रेचयेत्॥९८॥

baddhapadmāsano yogī prāṇaṁ candreṇa pūrayet ।
dhārayitvā yathāśakti punaḥ sūryeṇa recayet ॥ 98 ॥

98. The yogi seated in the bound-lotus posture should fill the breath through the moon; having retained it according to his capacity, he should then exhale through the sun.[1]

1. Inhale through the moon channel (*candra, left nostril / iḍā-nāḍī*)*, retain the breath* (*kumbhaka*) *to one's capacity, and then exhale through the sun channel* (*sūrya, right nostril / piṅgalā-nāḍī*)*.*

अमृतंदधिसङ्काशं गोक्षीरधवलोपमम्।
ध्यात्वा चन्द्रमसो बिम्बं प्राणायामी सुखी भवेत्॥९९॥

amṛtaṁdadhisaṅkāśaṁ gokṣīradhavalopamam ।
dhyātvā candramaso bimbaṁ prāṇāyāmī sukhī bhavet ॥ 99 ॥

99. (Resembling) nectar, appearing like curd, and comparable to the whiteness of cow's milk; having meditated on the disk of the moon, the prāṇāyāma practitioner becomes happy (blissful).

प्राणं सूर्येण चाकृष्य पुरयेदुदरं शनैः।
कुम्भयित्वा विधानेन पुनश्चन्द्रेण रेचयेत्॥१००॥

prāṇaṁ sūryeṇa cākṛṣya purayedudaraṁ śanaiḥ ।
kumbhayitvā vidhānena punaścandreṇa recayet ॥ 100 ॥

100. Drawing in the breath through the sun (right nostril) and gently filling the abdomen, having retained it according to the method, one should then exhale through the moon (left nostril).

प्रज्वलज्ज्वलनज्वालापुञ्जमादित्यमण्डलम्।
ध्यात्वा नाभिस्थितं योगी प्राणायामे सुखी भवेत्॥१०१॥

prajvalajjvalanajvālāpuñjamādityamaṇḍalam ।
dhyātvā nābhisthitaṁ yogī prāṇāyāme sukhī bhavet ॥ 101 ॥

101. The disk of the sun, a blazing mass of burning flames, meditating on it as situated at the navel, the yogi becomes happy (blissful) in prāṇāyāma.

प्राणंश्चेदिडयापिबेत्परिमितं भूयोऽन्यया रेचयेत्
पीत्वा पिङ्गलया समीरणमथो बद्ध्वा त्यजेद् वामया।
सूर्यचन्द्रमसोरनेन विधिना बिम्बद्वयं ध्यायतां
शुद्धा नाडिगणा भवन्ति यमिनां मासत्रयादूर्ध्वतः॥१०२॥

prāṇaṁścediḍayāpibetparimitaṁ bhūyo'nyayā recayet
pītvā piṅgalayā samīraṇamatho baddhvā tyajed vāmayā ।
sūryacandramasoranena vidhinā bimbadvayaṁ dhyāyatāṁ
śuddhā nāḍigaṇā bhavanti yamināṁ māsatrayādūrdhvataḥ ॥ 102 ॥

102. If one inhales the breath through the iḍā in a measured way and exhales again through the other (piṅgalā), then inhales through the piṅgalā and, having retained (it), releases through the left (iḍā); for those meditating on the pair of disks of sun and moon by this method, the networks of nāḍīs of the self-controlled become purified after three months.

यथेष्टं धारणं वायोरनलस्य प्रदीपनम्।
नादाभिव्यक्तिरारोग्यं जायते नाडिशोधने॥१०३॥

yatheṣṭaṁ dhāraṇaṁ vāyoranalasya pradīpanam ।
nādābhivyaktirārogyaṁ jāyate nāḍiśodhane ॥ 103 ॥

103. In the purification of the nāḍīs arise: breath retention at will, the kindling of the (inner) fire, manifestation of the inner sound, and perfect health.

प्राणो देहे स्थितो वायुरपानस्य निरोधनात्।
एकश्वसनमात्रेणोद्घाटयेत् गगने गतिम्॥१०४॥

prāṇo dehe sthito vāyurapānasya nirodhanāt ।
ekaśvasanamātreṇodghāṭayet gagane gatim ॥ 104 ॥

104. When the air (prāṇa) residing in the body is united by the restraint of apāna, then, within the measure of a single breath, one should open the pathway in the sky

पूरकः कुम्भकश्चैव रेचकः प्रणवात्मकः।
प्राणायामो भवेत् त्रेधा मत्रद्वादशसंयुतः॥१०५॥

pūrakaḥ kumbhakas caiva recakaḥ praṇavātmakaḥ ।
prāṇāyāmo bhavet tredhā matra-dvādaśa-saṁyutaḥ ॥ 105 ॥

105. Inhalation, breath retention, and exhalation, all having Oṃ as their essence, constitute prāṇāyāma, which is threefold and accompanied by twelve time-units.[1]

1. In Sanskrit prosody (chandas), a mātrā is the unit of time required to pronounce a short syllable (like a, i, u). A long vowel (ā, ī, ū) is two mātrās. In yoga, mātrā became a timing measure for breath.

Phonetic method: mentally or audibly reciting a syllable (often Oṃ or a bīja mantra) at a slow, steady pace.
Pulse-beat method: using the practitioner's own pulse or heartbeat as a count.

Many haṭhayoga texts (Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā, Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā, Śiva Saṁhitā) give ratios for the three stages:

Beginner: 1 : 1 : 1 (equal pūraka : kumbhaka : recaka), each 12 mātras = total 36 mātras per cycle.
Intermediate: 1 : 4 : 2 — e.g., 12 : 48 : 24 mātras = total 84 mātras per cycle.
Advanced: Longer kumbhaka, sometimes 1 : 8 : 4 or more.

This verse states mātra-dvādaśa-saṁyutaḥ, "accompanied by twelve mātras." Contextually, this can mean: each phase = 12 mātras (total 36). Or in some traditions, total cycle = 12 mātras, meaning a 4 : 4 : 4 distribution (much shorter, for beginners).

How 12 Mātras are Counted in Practice:

Phonetic Oṃ Method:

Mentally recite Oṃ twelve times for each phase.
Each Oṃ pronounced slowly (≈ 1.5–2 seconds) gives about 18–24 seconds per phase.

Pulse Method:

One mātrā = one heartbeat.
12 heartbeats = ~10–12 seconds.

Thus, a 12-mātra pūraka + kumbhaka + recaka totals ~ 30–36 seconds for beginners.

मात्राद्वादशसंयुक्तौ दिवाकरनिशाकरौ।
दोषजालमपध्नन्तौ ज्ञातव्यौ योगिभिः सदा॥१०६॥

mātrādvādaśasaṁyuktau divākara-niśākarau ।
doṣa-jālam apadhnantau jñātavyau yogibhiḥ sadā ॥ 106 ॥

106. The sun[1] and the moon,[2] endowed with twelve mātras,[3] which blows away the web of impurities, should always be known by yogis.[4]

1. "The Sun" (divākara) = piṅgalā nāḍī (right nostril).

2. "The Moon" (niśākara) = iḍā nāḍī (left nostril).

3. Each is practiced with a 12-mātra timing in alternate nostril breathing.

4. Their combined action, "blows away" (apadhmantau) the "web" (jāla) of doṣa (impurities), i.e., cleansing the nāḍīs.

पूरके द्वादश प्रोक्ताः कुम्भके षोडशैव तु।
रेचके दश चोम्कराः प्राणायामः स उच्यते॥१०७॥

pūrake dvādaśa proktāḥ kumbhake ṣoḍaśaiva tu ।
recake daśa comkarāḥ prāṇāyāmaḥ sa ucyate ॥ 107 ॥

107. In inhalation, twelve are prescribed; in retention, sixteen indeed; in exhalation, ten Oṃ's, this is called prāṇāyāma.[1]

1. This verse prescribes a prāṇāyāma pattern of 12 Oṃ's for inhalation, 16 for retention, and 10 for exhalation, using the oṅkāra as the timing unit. This ratio differs from the equal 12–12–12 count, slightly shortening exhalation while extending kumbhaka.

अधमे द्वादश प्रोक्ता मध्यमे द्विगुणा मता।
उत्तमे त्रिगुणा ख्याताः प्राणायामस्य निर्णयः॥१०८॥

adhame dvādaśa proktā madhyame dviguṇā matā ।
uttame triguṇā khyātāḥ prāṇāyāmasya nirṇayaḥ ॥ 108 ॥

108. In the lowest stage, twelve (units) are prescribed; in the middle, they are considered double; in the highest, triple, this is the standard of prāṇāyāma.[1]

1. The verse sets a graduated standard for prāṇāyāma counts: beginners use 12 units per phase, intermediates double this to 24, and advanced practitioners triple it to 36.

Following the 12–16–10 Oṃ-count pattern:

Adhama (beginner) ratio: 12: 16: 10
Madhyama (intermediate) ratio: 24: 32: 20
Uttama (advanced) ratio: 36: 48: 30

अधमे च धनो धर्मः कम्पो भवति मधयमे।
उत्तमे स्थानमाप्नोति ततो वायुं निरोधयेत्॥१०९॥

adhame ca dhano dharmaḥ kampo bhavati madhayame ।
uttame sthānamāpnoti tato vāyuṁ nirodhayet ॥ 109 ॥

109. In the lowest stage, the characteristic property is (chest expansion); in the middle, trembling occurs; in the highest, one attains the proper state (of stability), thereafter the breath should be restrained.[1]

1. Only upon reaching this stability should full restraint of the breath (vāyu-nirodha) be practiced.

बद्धपद्नासनो योगी नमस्कृत्य गुरुं शिवम्।
भ्रूमध्ये दृष्टिरेकाकी प्राणायामं समभ्यसेत्॥११०॥

Baddhā-padmāsano yogī namaskṛtya guruṁ śivam ।
bhrūmadhye dṛṣṭir ekākī prāṇāyāmaṁ samabhyset ॥ 110 ॥

110. A yogi seated in the bound lotus posture, having saluted his guru Śiva, with gaze fixed singly between the eyebrows, should practice prāṇāyāma.

ऊर्ध्वमाकृष्य चापानवायुं प्राणे नियुज्य च।
उर्ध्वमानीय तं शक्त्या सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते॥१११॥

ūrdhvamākṛṣya cāpānavāyuṁ prāṇe niyujya ca ।
urdhvamānīya taṁ śaktyā sarvapāpaiḥ pramucyate ॥ 111 ॥

111. Having drawn the apāna-vāyu upward and joined it to prāṇa, and having led it upward by force, one is freed from all sins.[1]

1. This verse describes drawing the downward-moving breath (apāna) upward, joining it with the upward-moving breath (prāṇa), and lifting the combined current by yogic force into the suṣumṇā nāḍī.

द्वाराणां नवकं निरुद्ध्य मरुत पीत्वा दृढं धारयेत्
नीत्वाकाशमपानवह्निसहितं शक्त्या समुद्धटितम्।
आत्मस्थानयुतस्त्वनेन विधिना विन्यस्य मूर्घ्न ध्रुवं
यावत्तिष्ठति तावदेन महतां संघेन संस्तूयते॥११२॥

dvārāṇāṁ navakaṁ niruddhya maruta pītvā dṛḍhaṁ dhārayet
nītv ākāśam apāna-vahni-sahitaṁ śaktyā samuddhaṭitam ।

ātma-sthāna-yutas tv anena vidhinā vinyasya mūrghna dhruvaṁ
yāvat tiṣṭhati tāvad enaṁ mahatāṁ saṁghena saṁstūyate ॥ 112 ॥

112. Having closed the nine gates, and having drawn in the breath, he should hold it firmly; having led into the (inner) space the apāna along with the fire, lifted up by the power (of śakti), and placed it firmly at the crown joined with the seat consciousness of the self (ātma-sthāna), by this method, he is praised by the assembly of the great for as long as he abides in that state."

प्राणायामो भवत्येवं पातकेन्धनपावकः।
भवोदधिमहासेतुः प्रोच्यते योगिभिः सदा॥११३॥

prāṇāyāmo bhavatyevaṁ pātakendhanapāvakaḥ ।
bhavodadhimahāsetuḥ procyate yogibhiḥ sadā ॥ 113 ॥

113. Thus, prāṇāyāma becomes the fire that burns the fuel of sins;[1] it is always called by yogis: "the great bridge across the ocean of worldly existence (saṁsāra)."

1. Sins are the "fuel," and prāṇāyāma is the "wind" that enkindles, and enflames yogāgni, the inner sacrificial "fire", which rises up through the suṣumṇā, burning sins to ash in the fire of samādhi.

प्राणायामे महान् धर्मो योगिनो मोक्षदयकः।
प्राणायामे दिवारात्रौ दोषजालं परित्यजेत्॥११४॥

prāṇāyāme mahān dharmoṁ yogino mokṣadayakaḥ ।
prāṇāyāme divārātrau doṣajālaṁ parityajet ॥ 114 ॥

114. In prāṇāyāma lies the great dharma of the yogi, bestowing liberation. Through prāṇāyāma, day and night, one should cast out the web of impurities.

आसनेन रुजो हन्ति प्राणायामेन पातकम्।
विकारं मानसं योगी प्रत्याहारेण मुण्चति॥११५॥

āsanena rujo hanti prāṇāyāmena pātakam ।
vikāraṁ mānasaṁ yogī pratyāhāreṇa muṇcati ॥ 115 ॥

115. By āsana, he destroys disease; by prāṇāyāma, he burns away sin; by pratyāhāra, the yogi releases the mind from disturbance.

मनोधैर्यं धारणया ध्यानाच्चैतन्यमद्भुतम्।
समाधौ मोक्षमानोति त्यक्त्व कर्म शुभाशुभम्॥११६॥

manodhairyaṁ dhāraṇayā dhyānāccaitanyamadbhutam ।
samādhau mokṣamānoti tyaktva karma śubhāśubham ॥ 116 ॥

116. Through dhāraṇā comes steadiness of mind; from dhyāna, wondrous (pure) consciousness; having cast aside both good and evil deeds, one attains liberation in samādhi.

प्राणायामद्विषटकेन प्रत्याहारः प्रकीर्तितः।
प्रत्याहारद्विषट्केन ज्ञायते धारणा शुभा॥११७॥

prāṇāyāmadviṣaṭakena pratyāhāraḥ prakīrtitaḥ ।
pratyāhāradviṣaṭkena jñāyate dhāraṇā śubhā ॥ 117 ॥

117. Pratyāhāra is proclaimed to be (attained) through twelve prāṇāyāmas; auspicious dhāraṇā is known through twelve pratyāhāras.[1]

1. This verse sets a progression of practice counts, twelve prāṇāyāmas cultivate pratyāhāra (withdrawal of the senses), and twelve such pratyāhāras lead to dhāraṇā (one-pointed concentration). It reflects the graded discipline from control of breath to control of senses to control of mind.

धारणा द्वादश प्रोक्तां ध्यानं धानविशारदैः।
ध्यानद्वादशकेनैव समाधिरभिधीयते॥११८॥

dhāraṇā dvādaśa proktāṁ dhyānaṁ dhānaviśāradaiḥ ।
dhyānadvādaśakenaiva samādhirabhidhīyate ॥ 118 ॥

118. Twelve dhāraṇās have been taught; meditation is (likewise) expounded by the masters of the art. Through that very set of twelve meditations, samādhi is defined.

1. The verse outlines a yogic progression: twelve dhāraṇās lead to twelve corresponding dhyānas, mastery of which alone yields samādhi, the consummation of meditation in total absorptive unity.

सम्बद्धासनमेढ्रमंघ्रियुगलं कर्णाक्षिनासापुटा
द्वाराण्यगुलिभिर्नियम्य पवनं वक्त्रेण चापूरितम्।
ध्यात्वा वक्षसि तत्त्वपानसहितं मूर्ध्नि स्थितं धारये
देवं याति नरः शिवेन समतां योगीश्वरस्तन्मयः॥११९॥

sambaddhāsanameḍhramaṁdhriyugalaṁ karṇākṣināsāpuṭā
dvārāṇyagulibhirniyamya pavanaṁ vaktreṇa cāpūritam ।
dhyātvā vakṣasi tattvapānasahitaṁ mūrdhni sthitaṁ dhāraye
devaṁ yāti naraḥ śivena samatāṁ yogīśvarastanmayaḥ ॥ 119 ॥

119. Having bound the posture and the pair of generative organs, and having closed the apertures of the ears, eyes, and nostrils with the fingers, restraining the breath and filling it through the mouth, meditating in the chest upon the deity accompanied by the drinking-in of the truth-principle, one should hold (himself) established at the crown of the head; the man, becoming absorbed in that deity, attains equality with Śiva, being a master of yoga.[1]

1. *This verse outlines a composite yogic practice involving āsana-fixation, genital lock (from the heel of the foot during mūlabandha), and śanmukhī-mudrā (sealing the ears, eyes, and nostrils with the fingers), followed by breath retention after oral inhalation. The yogin visualises the deity in the heart in conjunction with "drinking" the ultimate truth (tattvapāna), then raises and fixes this divine presence at the crown of the head. Through this absorption, he becomes identical with the deity, thereby attaining equality with Śiva as a master of yoga.*

पवने गगनं प्राप्ते ध्वनिरुत्पद्यते महान्।
घण्टादीनां प्रवाद्यानां तदा सिद्धिरदूरतः॥१२०॥

pavane gaganaṁ prāpte dhvanirutpadyate mahān ।
ghaṇṭādīnāṁ pravādyānāṁ tadā siddhiradūrataḥ ॥ 120 ॥

120. When the breath has reached the sky,[1] a great sound arises, like that of bells and other instruments.[2] Then perfection is not far away.

1. In nāda-yoga and related haṭha-yogic practice, "when the breath has reached the sky" (gagana), refers to the ascent of prāṇa through the suṣumnā-nāḍī to the cranial centre (brahmarandhra). At this stage, an inner "unstruck" sound (anāhata-nāda) is perceived, here likened to the tones of bells and other instruments. This auditory sign marks the nearness of yogic attainment (siddhi).

2. The Haṃsopaniṣad describes ten progressive sounds (nāda) perceived in the practice of nādānusandhāna (नादानुसन्धान), in the following order:

1. *Ciṇiti (चिणिति): a high-pitched buzzing, like that of bees. **
2. *Ciṇiciṇīti (चिणिचिणीति): an intensified form of the same bee-like buzzing.*
3. *Ghaṇṭānāda (घण्टानाद): the ringing of a large bell, heard as if from above.*
4. *Śaṅkhanāda (शङ्खनाद): the prolonged blast of a conch.*
5. *Tantrīnāda (तन्त्रीनाद): the sound of a stringed instrument (tantrī-vīṇā).*
6. *Tālanāda (तालनाद): the clash of bronze cymbals.*
7. *Veṇunāda (वेणुनाद): the sound of a flute.*
8. *Bherīnāda (भेरीनाद): the roll of a drum.*
9. *Mṛdaṅganāda (मृदङ्गनाद): the beat of the two-headed mṛdaṅga drum.*
10. *Meghanāda (मेघनाद): the loud rumble of thunder ("the roar of clouds").*

** Ciṇī is onomatopoeic, imitating the fine, high resonance perceived in nāda-yoga.*

Some traditions recognise additional intermediate sounds, such as: cīravākī (चीरवाकी), the chirping of a cricket, placed between the second and third sounds; tantrīghoṣa (तन्त्रीघोष), the "zither-stick" sound of the eka-tantrī vīṇā (closely related to the alāpini vīṇā), considered identical with the fifth sound; and dāvanirghoṣa (दावनिर्घोष), the crackling of a

forest fire, occurring between the ninth and tenth sounds. This carries the राव (*rāva*) *"resonance" of nāda to twelve different distinctive sounds. †*

† See Jayaratha's commentary, Tantrālokaviveka on Abhinavagupta's Tantrāloka.

प्राणायामेन युक्तेन सर्वरोक्षयो भवेत्।
आयुक्ताभ्यासयोगेन सर्वरोगस्य संभवह्॥१२१॥

prāṇāyāmena yuktena sarvarokṣayo bhavet ।
āyuktābhyāsayogena sarvarogasya saṁbhavah ॥ 121 ॥

121. By breath-control properly applied, the destruction of all diseases may occur.
By association with improper practice, the origin of all diseases occurs.

हिक्का श्वासश्च कासक्ष शिरः कर्णाक्षिवेदनाः।
भवन्ति विविधा रोगाः पवनस्य व्यतिक्रमात्॥१२२॥

hikkā śvāsaśca kāsakṣa śiraḥ karṇākṣivedanāḥ ।
bhavanti vividhā rogāḥ pavanasya vyatikramāt ॥ 122 ॥

122. Various diseases, (such as) hiccups, asthma, cough, consumption,[1] and pains in the head, ears, and eyes, arise from the disturbance of the vital wind (vāta).[2]

1. "Consumption" was the common name for tuberculosis (especially pulmonary TB).

2. In yogic physiology, these ailments are traced to disturbance of the vital wind (vāta) in its different functions: prāṇa-vāyu (hiccups, asthma), udāna-vāyu (cough), vyāna-vāyu (pains in head, ears, eyes), and apāna-vāyu when weakened can contribute indirectly to wasting diseases. Balance of these currents is essential for health.

यथा सिंहो गजो व्याघ्रो भवेद् वश्यः शनैः शनैः।
तथैव सेवितो वायुरन्यथा हन्ति साधकम्॥१२३॥

yathā siṁho gajo vyāghro bhaved vaśyaḥ śanaiḥ śanaiḥ ।
tathaiva sevito vāyuranyathā hanti sādhakam ॥ 123 ॥

123. Just as a lion, an elephant, or a tiger may, gradually (with time) become tame, so too the vital wind when properly cultivated with care; otherwise, (without care and gradual discipline) it kills the practitioner.

युक्तं युक्तं त्यजेद् वायुं युक्तं युक्तं च पूरयेत्।
युक्तं युक्तं च बनीयादेवं सिद्धिमाप्नुयात्॥१२४॥

yuktaṁ yuktaṁ tyajed vāyuṁ yuktaṁ yuktaṁ ca pūrayet ।
yuktaṁ yuktaṁ ca banīyādevaṁ siddhimāpnuyāt ॥ 124 ॥

124. With measured care exhale; with measured care inhale; with measured care retain; in this way, success is attained.

चरतां चक्षुरादीनां विषयेषु यथाक्रमम्।
यत्प्रत्याहरणं तेषां प्रत्याहारः स उच्यते॥१२५॥

caratāṁ cakṣurādīnāṁ viṣayeṣu yathākramam ।
yatpratyāharaṇaṁ teṣāṁ pratyāhāraḥ sa ucyate ॥ 125 ॥

125. Of the eyes and the other (sense organs) moving among their objects in due order, the act of drawing them back is called 'pratyāhāra' (withdrawal of the senses).

यथा तृतीयकालस्थो रविः प्रत्याहरेत् प्रभाम्।
तृतौयाङ्गस्थितो योगी विकारं मानसं तथा॥१२६॥

yathā tṛtīyakālastho raviḥ pratyāharet prabhām ।
tṛtauyāṅgasthito yogī vikāraṁ mānasaṁ tathā ॥ 126 ॥

126. Just as the sun, positioned in the third time phase (evening), withdraws its light, so too the yogi, established in the third limb (pratyāhāra), withdraws from mental exertion in the same way.[1]

1. The term -stha (स्थ), from √sthā, "to stand, to remain", often means more than mere physical position. In yogic usage it can signify being firmly established or abiding in a state of practice or realisation. Thus "tṛtīyāṅga-sthitaḥ yogī" may imply not only that the yogi is "in" the third limb of yoga, but that he is steadily established there, withdrawn from outer distractions and abiding in inner stillness.

अङ्गमध्ये यथाङ्गन् कूर्मः संकोचयेद् ध्रुवम्।
योगी प्रत्याहरेदेवमिन्द्रियाणि तथात्मनि॥१२७॥

aṅgamadhye yathāṅgan kūrmaḥ saṁkocayed dhruvam ।
yogī pratyāharedevamindriyāṇi tathātmani ॥ 127 ॥

127. As a tortoise steadily retracts its limbs into (the centre of) its body, (so, likewise, in this same manner) the yogi withdraws the senses into the self.

अमेध्यमथवा मेध्यं यं यं पश्यति चक्षुषा।
तत्तमात्मेति विज्ञाय प्रत्याहरति योगवित॥१२८॥

amedhyamathavā medhyaṁ yaṁ yaṁ paśyati cakṣuṣā ।
tattamātmeti vijñāya pratyāharati yogavita ॥ 128 ॥

128. Whatever the yogin sees with his eye, whether impure or pure, recognising it as “That is the Ātman” (of one’s own self), he withdraws inward, being a knower of yoga.

यद्यच्छृणोति कर्णाभ्यामप्रियं चाथवाप्रियम्।
तत्तदात्मेति विज्ञाय प्रत्याहरति योगवित्॥१२९॥

yadyacchṛṇoti karṇabhyāmapriyaṁ cāthavāpriyam ।
tattadātmeti vijñāya pratyāharati yogavit ॥ 129 ॥

129. Whatever he hears with the ears, whether unpleasant or pleasant, recognising each as that, "that is the Self," the yogin withdraws back inward, being a knower of yoga.

अमिष्टमथवा मिष्टं यद्यत्स्पृशति जिह्वया।
तत्तदात्मेति विज्ञाय प्रत्याहरति योगवित्॥१३०॥

amiṣṭamathavā miṣṭaṁ yadyatspṛśati jihvayā ।
tattadātmeti vijñāya pratyāharati yogavit ॥ 130 ॥

130. Whatever the yogin touches with the tongue, whether disagreeable or agreeable, recognising each as that, "that is the Self", he withdraws back inward, being a knower of yoga.

सुगन्धमयं दुर्गन्धं यद्यज्जिघ्रति नासया।
तत्तदात्मेति विज्ञाय प्रत्याहरति योगवित्॥१३१॥

sugandhamayaṁ durgandhaṁ yadyajjidhrati nāsayā ।
tattadātmeti vijñāya pratyāharati yogavit ॥ 131 ॥

131. Whatever the yogin smells with the nose, whether fragrant or foul, recognising each as that, "that is the Self", he withdraws back inward, being a knower of yoga.

कर्कशं कोमलं वापि यद्यत् स्पृशति च त्वचा।
तत्तदात्मेति विज्ञाय प्रत्याहरति योगवित्॥१३२॥

karkaṁśaṁ komalaṁ vāpi yadyat spṛśati ca tvacā ।
tattadātmeti vijñāya pratyāharati yogavit ॥ 132 ॥

132. Whatever the yogin touches with the skin, whether rough or soft, recognising each as that, "that is the Self", he withdraws back inward, being a knower of yoga.

चन्द्रामृत्मयीं धारां प्रत्याहरति भास्करः।
यत्प्रत्यहरणं तस्याः प्रत्याहारः स उच्यते॥१३३॥

candrāmṛtmayīṁ dhārāṁ pratyāharati bhāskaraḥ ।
yatpratyaharaṇaṁ tasyāḥ pratyāhāraḥ sa ucyate ॥ 133 ॥

133. Just as the sun withdraws the stream[1] composed of moon-nectar.[2] That withdrawal of her is called pratyāhāra.

1. The moon (candra) is located at the top of the head and continuously drips amṛta, the nectar of immortality, downward through the body. This "nectar" represents vital energy or the life-force stream. The sun, in contrast, is said to reside in the lower body and burns up or absorbs this nectar. The "sun withdrawing the moon-nectar" refers to the process by which this energy is reabsorbed inward, reversing its normal flow. As energy that would normally flow outward is turned inward and withdrawn, that process is called pratyāhāra.

2. Nectar of immortality.

एका स्त्री भुज्यते द्वाभ्यामागता चन्द्रमण्डलात्।
तृतीयोऽपि पुनस्ताभ्यां स भवेदजरामरः॥१३४॥

ekā strī bhujyate dvābhyāmāgatā candramaṇḍalāt ।
tṛtīyo'pi punastābhyāṁ sa bhavedajarāmaraḥ ॥ 134 ॥

134. One woman, having come from the moon's sphere, is enjoyed by two. The third, uniting with those two, becomes free from old age and death.[1]

1. Nāth haṭha-yoga reads the verse as a play on two inner fluids and the three main nāḍīs. The "one woman" is bindu, the white lunar nectar that "dwells at the moon" in the head (śaśisthāne sthito binduḥ) . The "two" who consume her are the side-channels: left iḍā, lunar, conducts the in-breath prāṇa and the descending nectar, while right piṅgalā, solar, carries the out-breath apāna and the up-rushing red rajas that dries it. The "third" is the central suṣumṇā; through bandhas and breath-retention the yogin pulls prāṇa and apāna into this middle path, achieving the union of bindu and rajas (tayor aikyaṃ sudurlabham) . When united, the nectar is no longer lost but "removes hunger, thirst, disease and death," says the Āmaraughaśāsana; the condition the verse names ajarāmaraḥ, freedom from ageing and mortality.

2. In the Buddhist model, the Sekoddeśa[*] 83–85 explains that the joint rise of śukra and the lunar orb to the crown lotus establishes the sixteenth lunar phase (kalā ṣoḍaśī), the source of the nectar (amṛta-bindu) alluded to as the "one woman". The channels that appropriate this fluid are named in verse 46: the left iḍā, lunar and aqueous, and the right piṅgalā, solar and fiery. Verse 57 adds that iḍā conducts the five skandhas while piṅgalā conducts the five great elements, a sixth current residing in the middle; verse 62 restates this polarity, placing the ether-to-mind series on the left and the earth-to-form series on the right. Verses 51–52 describe the yogic withdrawal and upward conveyance of these ten forces through the suṣumṇā, and verses 67–68 declare that their convergence in that "middle path" checks senescence and death. Consequently, Viveka-mārtaṇḍa 134 encapsulates the process: the nectar born of the moon ("one woman") is usually "enjoyed" by iḍā and piṅgalā ("two"); when it is drawn into suṣumṇā ("the third"), the yogin preserves it, and with "his

tongue turned upward, drinks the stream of nectar that flows into the mouth" and attains the ajarāmara state, immunity to ageing and mortality.

> ** Sekoddeśaḥ. A 174-verse Sanskrit uddeśa ("summary") that survives as the only extant chapter of the lost twelve-part Paramādibuddha (root Kālacakra-tantra). Translated into Tibetan (Toh 361) in the late 11th century, it outlines the seven empowerments (saptābhiṣeka) and the subtle-body discipline later elaborated in Nāropa's Sekoddeśaṭīkā, making it the foundation text of the Kālacakra yoga.*

नाभिदेशे वसत्येको भास्करो दहनात्मनः।
अमृतात्मा स्थितो नित्यं तालुमूले च चन्द्रमाः॥

nābhideśe vasaty eko bhāskaro dahanātmanaḥ
amṛtātmā sthito nityaṃ tālumūle ca candramāḥ

135. In the region of the navel dwells the one Sun, of fiery essence.
At the root of the palate ever abides the Moon, whose nature is nectar.

वर्षत्यधोमुखश्चन्द्रो ग्रस्त्यूर्ध्वमुखो रविः।
ज्ञातव्या करणं तत्र येन पीयूषमाप्यते॥१३६॥

varṣatyadhomukhaścandro grastyūrdhvamukho raviḥ ।
jñātavyā karaṇaṁ tatra yena pīyūṣamāpyate ॥ 136 ॥

136. The moon, shining and facing downward, rains down its essence; the sun, facing upward, seizes and consumes it. The method[1] by which the drinkable essence is obtained must be understood therein.

1. The method to "drink the essence" (pīyūṣa) that flows from the moon and is otherwise consumed by the sun.

ऊर्ध्वं नाभिरधस्तालु चोर्ध्वं भानुरधः शशी।
करणं विपरीताख्यं गुरुवाक्येन लभ्यते॥१३७॥

ūrdhvaṁ nābhiradhastālu cordhvaṁ bhānuradhaḥ śaśī ।
karaṇaṁ viparītākhyaṁ guruvākyena labhyate ॥ 137 ॥

137. The navel is above and the palate below; the sun is above and the moon below, this is the method known as viparīta (reverse);[1] and it is attained through the teaching of the guru.

1. This verse introduces the yogic practice known as viparīta-karaṇa, or "the reversed method." In ordinary physiology, the moon (bindu), located at the top of the head, releases a nectar-like essence (amṛta), which descends and is eventually consumed by the sun (fire) in the navel region. This natural downward flow gradually depletes vital energy, leading to ageing and death. The "reversal" described here involves inverting that flow.

The characteristics of Viparīta Karaṇī, and its results:

विपरीतकर्णीलक्षणं तत्फलं च ।
करणी विपरीताख्या सर्वाधिव्याधिनाशिनी ॥ १२२ ॥

viparītakaraṇīlakṣaṇaṃ tatphalaṃ ca |
karaṇī viparītākhyā sarvādhivyādhināśinī || 122 ||

122. The characteristics of Viparīta Karaṇī, and its results:
The posture called "Viparīta" is the destroyer of all bodily and mental diseases.

नित्यमभ्यासयुक्तस्य जाठराग्निविवर्धनी ।
आहारा बहवस्तस्य सम्पाद्याः साधकस्य च ॥ १२३ ॥

nityamabhyāsayuktasya jāṭharāgnivivardhanī |
āhārā bahavas tasya saṃpādyāḥ sādhakasya ca|| 123 ||

123. For one constantly engaged in this practice, (it is) an increaser of the digestive fire. A greater quantity of foods should be provided for him, the Sādhaka (practising this).

अल्पाहारा यदि भवेदग्निर्देहं हरेत् क्षणात् ।
अधःशिरश्चोर्ध्वपादः क्षणं स्यात् प्रथमे दिने ॥ १२४ ॥

alpāhārā yadi bhaved agnir dehaṃ haret kṣaṇāt |
adhaḥśiraś cordhvapādaḥ kṣaṇaṃ syāt prathame dine ||124 ||

*124. If the diet is (too) little, the digestive fire would consume the body immediately. * With the head down and feet (raised) up, this posture should (only) be (performed) for a moment on the first day.*

** In Viparīta Karaṇī, the stimulated jāṭharāgni ("digestive fire") can rapidly deplete bodily tissues if nourishment is insufficient. This verse cautions practitioners to maintain adequate food intake to counteract the effects of an increased digestive fire, thereby avoiding weakness or harm.*

क्षणात्तु किञ्चिदधिकमभ्यसेत्तु दिने दिने ।
वली च पलितं चैव षण्मासार्धान्न दृश्यते ॥ १२५ ॥

kṣaṇāttu kiṃcidadhikam abhyasettu dine dine |
valī ca palitaṃ caiva ṣaṇmāsārdhān na dṛśyate || 125 ||

125. But, (starting) from a moment, one should practise a little more (time) day by day. Indeed, (both) wrinkles and grey hair are not seen after six and a half months.

याममात्रं तु यो नित्यमभ्यसेत् स तु कालजित् ।
विपरीतकर्णीं तत्फलं चाह करणīti ॥ १२६ ॥

yāmamātraṃ tu yo nityam abhyaset sa tu kālajit |
viparītakaraṇīṃ tatphalaṃ cāha karaṇīti ||126 ||

126. But (for) whoever (who) should regularly practise (this) for a duration of a yāma (three hours), he indeed is a conqueror of time. (This is the posture) Viparīta Karaṇī, and its result (is) said (to be called) "Karaṇī" (that which is to be done).

स्वस्थितिविपरीतं क्रियतेति विपरीतकर्णी ।
तदेव प्रपञ्चयति- अध इति ॥ १२७ ॥

svasthitiviparītaṃ kriyata iti viparītakaraṇī |
tadeva prapañcayati- adha iti || 127||

127. The inversion of one's own posture is performed, thus (it is) called "Viparīta Karaṇī." Indeed, that very (posture) he explains in detail, beginning with the word "adhaḥ" ("downwards"). †

† *Adhaḥ ("downwards") literally directs the head below the feet in Viparīta Karaṇī. In another sense, it can also mean "downwards into the skull," from the inverted posture where the head is the body's lowest point, an orientation that channels prāṇa and vital essences back "downwards" into the bindu-sthāna.*

- yogatattvopaniṣat (English translation and footnotes, my own)

त्रिधा बद्धो वृषो यत्र रोखिति महास्वनः।
अनाहतं तु तच्चक्रं योगिनो हृदयेविदुः॥१३८॥

tridhā baddho vṛṣo yatra rokhiti mahāsvanaḥ ।
anāhataṁ tu taccakraṁ yogino hṛdayeviduḥ ॥ 138 ॥

138. Where the bull,[1] bound in three ways,[2] bellows[3] with a great sound,[4] that wheel is called anāhata, and yogins know it to be in the heart.

1. In yogic symbolism, the bull (vṛṣaḥ) stands for prāṇa, the vital force or breath-energy that moves through the body. It is strong, powerful, and hard to control, just like a bull! Nandi (the bull) is Śiva's gate-keeper (in charge of passage through the cakra's), as well as his mount.

नन्दिनं वृषरूपं च तं दृष्ट्वा शङ्करः प्रभुः ।
तुष्टाव च महादेवं भक्त्या परमया युतः ॥ १५ ॥

nandinaṁ vṛṣarūpaṁ ca taṁ dṛṣṭvā śaṅkaraḥ prabhuḥ |
tuṣṭāva ca mahādevaṁ bhaktyā paramayā yutaḥ || 15 ||

15. Seeing Nandin in the form of a bull (vṛṣarūpaṁ), the great Lord Śaṅkara was pleased. Filled with supreme devotion, Nandin praised Mahādeva.

प्रसन्नो भगवान् तस्मै वृषभं वाहनं ददौ ।
सन्निधत्ते स सदा तस्य गणो भक्तिपरायणः ॥ १६ ॥

prasanno bhagavān tasmai vṛṣabhaṁ vāhanaṁ dadau |
sannidhatte sa sadā tasya gaṇo bhaktiparāyaṇaḥ || 16 ||

> *16. The gracious Lord (Bhagavān), being pleased, granted him the bull as his vehicle (vṛṣabhaṁ vāhanaṁ). Since then, he ever remains near Śiva, devoted entirely to him, as one of his foremost attendants (gaṇa).*
>
> *- Liṅga Purāṇa, Part 1, Chapter 64, Verses 15–16*

2. This refers to the three granthis (energetic knots or blockages) in the subtle body:

> *1. Brahma granthi: located at the base of the spine, associated with physical desires and attachment to the material world.*
> *2. Viṣṇu granthi: located at the heart, connected with emotional attachment and ego.*
> *3. Rudra granthi: located at the forehead or between the eyebrows, related to intellectual pride and attachment to thought.*

When the verse says the bull is "bound in three ways" (tridhā baddhaḥ), it means prāṇa is blocked or restrained by these three knots, preventing it from freely rising through the central channel (suṣumnā).

3. √ru/rauti: "to roar, cry, bellow"; and also √rau: "to make a loud noise."

4. "Bellows with a great sound:" This refers to a mystical experience in yoga called the anāhata sound, a sound heard in deep meditation that is not caused by anything striking (hence an-āhata, "unstruck"). It is an internal vibration or hum that emerges when prāṇa begins to awaken and move upward through the heart centre.

अनाहतमतिक्रम्य चाक्रम्य मणिपूरकम्।
प्राप्ते प्राणे महापद्मं योगीतमृतायते॥१३९॥

anāhatamatikramya cākramya maṇipūrakam ।
prāpte prāṇe mahāpadmaṁ yogītamṛtāyate ॥ 139 ॥

139. Having gone over the Anāhata (heart chakra) and stepped (down) into the Maṇipūraka (navel chakra), when the prāṇa has reached the Great Lotus, the yogin attains immortality.

ऊर्धवं षोडशपत्रपद्मगलितं प्राणाद्वाप्तं हठा
दूर्ध्वस्यो रसनां नियम्य विवरे शान्ति परां चिन्तयन्।
उत्कल्लोलकलाजलं सुविमलं जिह्वाकुलम् यः पिबे
न्निर्दोषः स मृणालकोपुर्योगी चिरं जीवति॥१४०॥

ūrdhvaṁ ṣoḍaśapatrapadmagalitaṁ prāṇādvāptaṁ haṭhā
dūrdhvasyo rasanāṁ niyamya vivare śānti parāṁ cintayan ।
utkallolakalājalaṁ suvimalaṁ jihvākulam yaḥ pibet
nnirdoṣaḥ sa mṛṇālakopuryogī ciraṁ jīvati ॥ 140 ॥

140. The yogin who, having forcibly drawn upward the essence that drips from the sixteen-petalled lotus with the (heated) prāṇā, restraining the tongue upward in the cavity, while meditating on the

supreme tranquillity (beyond), he who drinks the pure fluid, rippling like nectar and filled with lunar energy through the tongue, becomes flawless, lotus-stalk-like in subtlety, and lives long.

काकचञ्चुवदास्येन शीतलं सलिलं पिबेत्।
प्राणापानविधानेन योगी भवति निर्जरः॥१४१॥

kākacañcuvadāsyena śītalaṁ salilaṁ pibet ।
prāṇāpānavidhānena yogī bhavati nirjaraḥ ॥ 141 ॥

141. One should drink the cool flowing stream (of rain-fall) with the mouth formed like a crow's beak,[1] and by regulation of prāṇa and apāna, the yogin becomes free from the decay of aging.

1. The beak is formed by the yogins lips and mouth to make it easier for the tip of the tongue to be raised up to the palate.

रसनातालुयोगेन योऽमृतं सततं पिबेत्।
अब्दार्द्धेन भवेत्तस्य सर्वरोगपरिक्षयः॥१४२॥

rasanātāluyogena yo'mṛtaṁ satataṁ pibet ।
abdārddhena bhavettasya sarvarogaparikṣayaḥ ॥ 142 ॥

142. He who constantly drinks the nectar (amṛta) by the union of the tongue with the palate, within half a year, for him, there arises the complete destruction of all diseases.[1]

1. अथातः परं गुह्यं शिवज्ञानामृतोत्तमम् ।
व्याधिमृत्युविनाशाय योगिनामुपवर्ण्यते ॥१॥

athātaḥ paramaṃ guhyaṃ śivajñānāmṛtottamam ।
vyādhimṛtyuvināśāya yogināṃ upavarṇyate ॥1॥

1. Now, from here, the supreme hidden secret, the highest nectar of the knowledge of Śiva, for the destruction of disease and death is here explained for yogins.*

** As well as "highest" knowledge (amongst humans), uttama (उत्तम) also refers to a type of tone (coming from the head), which is used in chanting hymns.*

षोडशारे खगे चक्रे चन्द्रकल्पितकर्णिके ।
स्वरूपेण परां तत्र स्रवन्तीम् अमृतं स्मरेत् ॥२॥

ṣoḍaśāre khage cakre candrakalpitakarṇike |
svarūpeṇa parāṃ tatra sravantīm amṛtaṃ smaret ॥2॥

2. Within the lotus-like wheel, sixteen-petalled and bird-like in form, whose central part (pericarp) is imagined as the moon, one should meditate upon the Supreme

(*parā*) *as one's own essential essence, streaming forth there as the immortal nectar* (*amṛta*).

पूर्वन्यासेन संनद्धः क्षणमेकं विचक्षणः ।
तस्तस्तु रसनां नीत्वा लम्बके विनियोजयेत् ॥३॥

pūrvanyāsena saṃnaddhaḥ kṣaṇam ekaṃ vicakṣaṇaḥ ।
tatas tu rasanāṃ nītvā lambake viniyojayet ॥3॥

3. Having steadied himself through the preliminary nyāsa (*mantric ritual placement of the breath*), *the wise practitioner should pause for a moment. Thereafter, he should guide the tongue upwards and place it at the limb called lambikā* (*the upper soft palate above the uvula, located within the nasopharyngeal region*).[†]

† Lambikā (*लम्बिका*) *or Lambikācakra is the name of the wheel* (*cakra*) *associated with Oḍḍiyāna.*

श्रवन्तममृतं दिव्यं चन्द्रबिम्बात्सितं स्मरेत्।
मुखमापूर्यते तस्य किं चिल्लवणवारिणा ॥४॥

sravantam amṛtaṃ divyaṃ candrabimbāt sitaṃ smaret ।
mukham āpūryate tasya kiṃ cil lavaṇavāriṇā ॥4॥

4. One should visualise the divine immortal essence, pure white as the disc of the moon, which streams forth, by this meditation, the mouth becomes filled with a subtle, slightly saline fluid.

लोहगन्धेन तच्चात्र न पिवेत् किं तु निक्षिपेत् ।
एवं समभ्यसेतावद्यावत् तत्स्वादु जायते ॥५॥

lohagandhena tac cātra na pivet kiṃ tu nikṣipet ।
evaṃ samabhyaset tāvad yāvat tat svādu jāyate ॥5॥

One should not drink it while it still bears the smell of iron,[‡] *rather, one should leave it aside,*[§] *Thus, in this manner, one should constantly practise until that pleasant sweet taste arises.*

[‡] *A faintly saline and ferruginous tang, akin to rusted iron dissolved in tepid sea-water, lingers on the palate.*

[§] *That is, by repeatedly spitting it out.*

जराव्याधिविनिर्मुक्तो जायते तत्पिवंस्ततः ।
षड्भिर्मासैरनायासाद्वत्सरान्मृत्युजिद्भवेत् ॥६॥

jarāvyādhivinirmukto jāyate tat pivaṃs tataḥ ।
ṣaḍbhir māsair anāyāsād vatsarān mṛtyujid bhavet ॥6॥

6. By drinking that (amṛta) which arises, one becomes completely liberated from old age and disease. Within six months and without effort, one becomes victorious over death for many years.

तत्र स्वादुनि संजाते तदाप्रभृति तत्रगम् ।
यदेव चिन्तयेद्द्रव्यं तेनास्यापूर्यते मुखम् ॥७॥

tatra svāduni saṃjāte tadāprabhṛti tatragam ।
yad eva cintayed dravyaṃ tenāsyāpūryate mukham ॥7॥

7. When sweetness in taste has arisen there, indeed, from that time onward, by that taste which is present there, whatever substance one may think of that is present there, by that, one's mouth becomes completely filled.

रुधिरं मदिरां वापि वसां वा क्षीरमेव वा ।
घृततैलादिकं वापि द्रवद्रव्यमनन्यधीः ॥८॥

rudhiraṃ madirāṃ vātha vasāṃ vā kṣīram eva vā ।
ghṛtatailādikaṃ vātha dravad dravyam ananyadhīḥ ॥8॥

8. Blood, wine, fat, milk, or even ghee, oil, and similar substances, any liquid substance; if concentrated upon exclusively, manifests for the one whose mind is undistracted.¶

¶ By the mind solely fixed on one taste, undivided by any other thought.

- Chapter 21, verses 1-8, Mālinīvijayottaratantra.
Devanāgarī & Romanised scripts based on the Gabriel Pradīpaka recension.
English translation, my own.

विशुद्धे परमे चक्रे धृत्वा सोमकलाजलम्।
उन्मार्गेण कृतं याति वञ्चयित्वा खेर्मुखं॥१४३॥

viśuddhe parame cakre dhṛtvā somakalājalam ।
unmārgeṇa kṛtaṁ yāti vañcayitvā khermukhaṁ ॥ 143 ॥

143. Having taken the sweet fluid of the lunar essence (soma-kalā-jala) in the supreme Viśuddha cakra, it proceeds by the upward path, having done so, bypassing the aperture of the mouth.

वि शब्देन स्मृतो हंसो निर्मलं शुद्धमुच्यते।
अतः कण्ठे विशुद्धाख्ये चक्रं चक्रविदो विदुः॥१४४॥

vi śabdena smṛto haṁso nirmalaṁ śuddhamucyate ।
ataḥ kaṇṭhe viśuddhākhye cakraṁ cakravido viduḥ ॥ 144 ॥

144. By the syllable "vi",[1] the haṁsa[2] is remembered; it is said to be stainless and pure. Therefore, in the throat, the chakra called Viśuddha[3] is known by those who are learned in (the knowledge of) the chakras

1. Vi (वि) *"a bird"* (*the swan,* हंस *haṃsa, is implied here*).

2. हकारेण बहिर् याति सकारेण विशेन् मरुत् |
हंस हंसेति मन्त्रोऽयम् सर्वजीवा जपन्ति तम् || १४६ ||

hakāreṇa bahir yāti sakāreṇa viśen marut |
haṃsa haṃseti mantro 'yam sarvajīvā japanti tam || 146 ||

146. Through 'ha' (ह)*, the breath goes out, and through 'sa'* (स)*, it enters in* (*to the body*)*. This mantra, 'haṃsa'* (हंस)*, is chanted by all living beings.*

- Yogabījam of Gorakṣanātha

3. Viśuddhicakra (विशुद्धिचक्र) *refers to the "wheel of purity", according to the Kubjikāmata-tantra: "The Wheel of Purity* (*viśuddhi-cakra*) *is the mother of awakened consciousness* (*bodha*)*. It is the End of the Sixteen above* (*the head*) *and below* (*in the throat*)*".*

अमृतं कन्दरे कृत्वा नासान्तसुषिरे क्रमात्।
स्वयमुच्चालितं याति वर्जयित्वा खेर्मुखं॥१४५॥

amṛtaṁ kandare kṛtvā nāsāntasuṣire kramāt ।
svayamuccālitaṁ yāti varjayitvā khermukhaṁ ॥ 145 ॥

145. Having placed the nectar of immortality (amṛta) in the cavity (kandara), gradually it moves in the subtle channel at the end of the nose (nāsānta-suṣira). It moves of its own accord, being propelled and lifted, bypassing the khermukha (mouth of khecarī).[1]

1. The term "kandara" (*"cavity"*) *in this verse refers to the palatal cavity* (*tālu-kandara*)*, the subtle space located behind the uvula, above the soft palate. The phrase "nāsānta-suṣire"* (*"in the subtle channel at the end of the nose"*) *denotes the nasopharyngeal vault, located behind the uvula and above the soft palate. This region is traditionally understood in Haṭha Yoga as the upper terminus of the suṣumnā nāḍī, not the nostrils per se. According to texts like the Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā and Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā, the suṣumnā rises from the base of the spine and culminates in the taluka* (*soft palate area*)*. The khecarī-mukha* (*"khecarī opening"*) *is the subtle point in this nasopharyngeal space where khecarī mudrā is applied.*

बद्धं सोमकलाजलं सुविमलं कण्ठस्थलादूर्ध्वतो
नासान्ते सुषिरे याति गगनद्वारं ततः सर्वतः।
ऊर्ध्वास्यो भुवि सन्निपत्य नितरामुत्तानगात्रः पिब
त्येवं यो विबुद्धो जितेन्द्रियगणो नैवास्ति तस्य क्षयः॥१४६॥

baddhaṁ somakalājalaṁ suvimalaṁ kaṇṭhasthalādūrdhvato
nāsānte suṣire yāti gaganadvāraṁ tataḥ sarvataḥ ।
ūrdhvāsyo bhuvi sannipatya nitarāmuttānagātraḥ piba
tyevaṁ yo vibuddho jitendriyagaṇo naivāsti tasya kṣayaḥ ॥ 146 ॥

146. The pure and clarified nectar of the lunar essence, when restrained, moves upwards from the region above the throat, and travels through the subtle channel at the end of the nose to the gateway of the sky (gaganadvāra), whence it spreads everywhere. Lying on the ground with face turned upward and limbs fully extended, the awakened one drinks it. For such a person, awakened in this way and with the senses fully subdued, there is no decay or decline.

उर्ध्वजिह्वः स्थिर भूत्वा सोमपनां करोति यः।
अब्दार्धेन न सन्देहो मृत्युं जयति योगवित्॥१४७॥

urdhvajihvaḥ sthira bhūtvā somapanāṁ karoti yaḥ ।
abdārdhena na sandeho mṛtyuṁ jayati yogavit ॥ 147 ॥

147. He whose tongue is upwards, having become firmly fixed, performs the act of drinking soma by means of the upward-stretched tongue, there is no doubt that such a knower of Yoga conquers death within half a year.

बद्धम् मूलबिल येन तेन विघ्नो विदारितः।
अजरामरमाप्नोति यथा पञ्चमुखो हरः॥१४८॥

baddham mūlabila yena tena vighno vidāritaḥ ।
ajarāmaramāpnoti yathā pañcamukho haraḥ ॥ 148 ॥

148. He by whom the root-cavity is sealed, for him, all obstacles are torn apart; he attains agelessness and deathlessness, like the five-faced Hara (Śiva).[1]

1. The phrase "like the five-faced Hara" refers to the yogin gradually awakening the five powers of Śiva—creation, preservation, destruction, concealment, and grace; each linked to a cakra in Nātha yoga. To attain "agelessness and deathlessness" (ajarāmara) is to realise the immortal, many-faced Self within.

संपीड्य रसनाग्रेण राजदन्तबिलं महत्।
ध्यात्वामृतमयीं देवीं षण्मासेन सुकविर्भवेत्॥१४९॥

saṁpīḍya rasanāgreṇa rājadantabilaṁ mahat ।
dhyātvāmṛtamayīṁ devīṁ ṣaṇmāsena sukavirbhavet ॥ 149 ॥

149. Having firmly pressed the great cavity of the royal tooth[1] with the tip of the tongue, and having meditated upon the goddess composed of nectar, one becomes a refined poet within six months.

1. The term rājadantabilaṁ (राजदन्तबिलं)*, "cavity of the royal tooth", refers to a subtle space located behind the upper front teeth and above the soft palate, identified in Nātha and Haṭha Yoga texts as the gateway to khecarī mudrā. Through progressive stretching and cutting of the tongue's frenulum, the yogi gradually enables the tongue to curl back into this nasopharyngeal cavity. This space, called the khecarī bhūmi or "skyward realm", is the seat of amṛta* (*nectar of immortality*) *dripping from the bindu centre at the crown.*

सर्वद्वाराणि बध्नाति यदूर्ध्वं च बिलं स्थितम्।
न मुञ्चत्यमृतं क्वापि स यथा यत्र धारणात्॥१५०॥

sarvadvārāṇi badhnāti yadūrdhvaṁ ca bilaṁ sthitam ।
na muñcatyamṛtaṁ kvāpi sa yathā yatra dhāraṇāt ॥ 150 ॥

150. He restrains and closes all the gateways (of the sense organs), and holds (the tongue) firmly upward in the cavity that is located above (the palate). He does not let the nectar of immortality escape anywhere, such is he, due to his steadfast concentration.[1]

1. Dhāraṇā (धारणा)*: "the act of holding, bearing, supporting, preserving; the faculty of retaining in the mind; keeping the mind collected, holding the breath suspended, steady abstraction of mind.*

चुम्बन्ती यदि लम्बिकाग्रमनिशं जिह्वा रसस्यन्दिनी
स्वीकारादुदकस्य दुग्धसदृशो मिष्टाज्यतुल्यस्य च।
व्याधीनां जरणं जरापहरणं शास्त्रागमोदगीरणं
तस्य स्यादमरत्वमष्टगुणितं दिव्यांगनाकर्षणम्॥१५१॥

cumbantī yadi lambikāgramaniśaṁ jihvā rasasyandinī
svīkārādudakasya dugdhasadṛśo miṣṭājyatulyasya ca ।
vyādhīnāṁ jaraṇaṁ jarāpaharaṇaṁ śāstrāgamodagīraṇaṁ
tasya syādamaratvamaṣṭaguṇitaṁ divyāṁganākarṣaṇam ॥ 151 ॥

151. If the tongue, ever-moist with nectar, nightly kisses the tip of the lambikā,[1] from the acceptance of that fluid, which resembles milk and is akin to sweet clarified butter, there results the calcining of diseases, the removal of old age, and an outpouring of scriptural knowledge, for him there arises immortality, increased eightfold, and the attraction of celestial maidens towards him.

1. The upper soft palate above the uvula, located within the nasopharyngeal region.

अणिमा महिमा चैव गरिमा लघिमा तथा।

ईशित्व च वशित्वं च प्राप्तिः प्राकाम्यमेवा च॥१५२॥

aṇimā mahimā caiva garimā laghimā tathā ।
īśitva ca vaśitvaṁ ca prāptiḥ prākāmyamevā ca ॥ 152 ॥

152. Aṇimā (becoming infinitesimal), mahimā (becoming infinitely vast), garimā (becoming infinitely heavy), and likewise laghimā (becoming weightless); along with īśitva (the power of lordship or divine rulership, with the ability to create, destroy, or control anything at will), vaśitva (the power of absolute lordship or control over all elements and beings), prāpti (power of access), and prākāmya (the power of reaching or obtaining anything desired), indeed. These are the eight siddhis (supernatural powers) said to arise from perfected yogic or spiritual discipline.

अमृतापूर्णदेहस्य योगिनो द्वित्रिवत्सरैः।
ऊर्ध्वं प्रवर्तते रेतो ह्यणिमादि गुणोदयम्॥१५३॥

amṛtāpūrṇadehasya yogino dvitrivatsaraiḥ ।
ūrdhvaṁ pravartate reto hyaṇimādi guṇodayam ॥ 153 ॥

153. Within two or three years, in the case of a yogin whose body is filled with ambrosia (amṛta), the seminal energy moves upward, and the rise of powers such as aṇimā (becoming infinitesimal) begins to occur.

नित्यं सोमकलपूर्णं शरीरं यस्य योगिनः।
तक्षकेणापि सदष्टं त विषं न च पीडयेत्॥१५४॥

nityaṁ somakalapūrṇaṁ śarīraṁ yasya yoginaḥ ।
takṣakeṇāpi sadaṣṭaṁ ta viṣaṁ na ca pīḍayet ॥ 154 ॥

154. The body of that yogin, which is perpetually filled with the essence of Soma, is not afflicted even when constantly bitten by Takṣaka (the serpent king)[1]; the poison cannot harm him.

1. Takṣaka (तक्षक) *is the name of the Nāga* (*snake*) *associated with Bhairava-nātha, Bhairava, as lord of time and death, is beyond the reach of Takṣaka. A Bhairava-siddha yogin, is one who has realised non-duality through Bhairava, remains untouched by the poisons of mortality, karma, and fear. This verse reflects the metaphysical invincibility of the realised yogin: even if Takṣaka, a symbol of time, death, or karmic retribution, bites repeatedly, the yogin remains unaffected because his body is saturated with Soma, the nectar of immortality,*

ईन्धनानि यथा वह्निस्तैलवर्तिं च दीपकः।
तथा सोमकलापूर्णं देहं देही न मुञ्चति॥१५५॥

īndhanāni yathā vahnistailavartiṁ ca dīpakaḥ ।
tathā somakalāpūrṇaṁ dehaṁ dehī na muñcati ॥ 155 ॥

155. Just as fire does not abandon its fuel, or a lamp its oil-soaked wick, so too does the embodied self (dehī) not leave a body that is filled with the essence of the full moon's phase.[1]

> 1. यत्र सोमकला ग्रस्ता क्षणं सूर्येण षोडशी ।
> मुखाद्वितस्तिमात्रं स्यात्तत्र बद्धपदो भव ॥ ११५ ॥
>
> *yatra somakalā grastā kṣaṇaṁ sūryeṇa ṣoḍaśī |*
> *mukhādvitastimātraṁ syāttatra badhapado bhava || 115 ||*
>
> *115. Where the sixteenth digit (ṣoḍaśī) of the moon (somakalā) is for a moment eclipsed (grastā) by the sun, and where that point is two hand-spans (dvitaṣṭi-mātram) above the mouth, there, in that place of binding be established"*
>
> *- Yoga-vāsiṣṭham 6.81.115*

आसनेन समायुक्तः प्राणायामेन संयुतः।
प्रत्याहारेण सम्पन्नो धारणां च समभ्यसेत्॥१५६॥

āsanena samāyuktaḥ prāṇāyāmena saṁyutaḥ ।
pratyāhāreṇa sampanno dhāraṇāṁ ca samabhyaset ॥ 156 ॥

156. Having been properly equipped with posture (āsana), united with breath control (prāṇāyāma), and accomplished in sense withdrawal (pratyāhāra), one should practise concentration (dhāraṇā)

हृदये पञ्चभूतानां धारणा च पृथक् पृथक्।
मनसो निश्चलत्वेन धारणा साभिधीयते॥१५७॥

hṛdaye pañcabhūtānāṁ dhāraṇā ca pṛthak pṛthak ।
manaso niścalatvena dhāraṇā sābhidhīyate ॥ 157 ॥

157. The concentration (dhāraṇā) on each of the five elements[1] separately in the heart[2], and the steadiness of the mind, this is referred to as dhāraṇā.

1. The five elements (pañcabhūta), of earth (pṛthivī), water (ap), fire (tejas), air (vāyu), and space (ākāśa).
2. The heart is the seat of Śarva, the third eye of Śivā, within the skull, the gateway to Bhairava-consciousness, the instantaneous manifestation of illumination, which bursts forth and is clearly revealed (at the heart of consciousness).

य पृथ्वी हरितालहेमरुचिरा पीता लकारान्विता
संयुक्ता कमलासनेन हि चतुष्कोणा हृदि स्थायिनी।
प्राणां तत्र विलीय पञ्चघटिकाश्चित्तान्वितात् धारये

देषा स्तम्भकरी सदाक्षितिजयं कुर्यद् भुवो धारणा॥१५८॥

ya pṛthvī haritālahemarucirā pītā lakārānvitā
saṁyuktā kamalāsanena hi catuṣkoṇā hṛdi sthāyinī ।
prāṇāṁ tatra vilīya pañcaghaṭikāścittānvitāt dhāraye
deṣā stambhakarī sadākṣitijayaṁ kuryad bhuvo dhāraṇā ॥ 158 ॥

158. That Earth (element), which is golden-yellow in hue, resembling orpiment and gold, marked by the letter la[1], united with the lotus-seat, and four-angled, abiding in the heart, into that, one should dissolve the vital breaths and sustain them there for five ghaṭikās[2], with focused mind. This concentration brings about steadiness of place (deśa-stambha) and always grants mastery over the element of earth.

1. La (ल) *is a semi-vowel, articulated with the tongue lightly touching the upper palate, and is a Sanskrit abbreviation for the laghu letter* (लघु), *a term used in the sense of "light/lightness,"* (*i.e., "the body becoming light"*).

2. From घट (*ghaṭa*)*: "pot" or "vessel", with the suffix -ikā, forming a diminutive or unitary noun. In early timekeeping, a ghaṭikā was measured using a water-clock, a pot with a hole that emptied over a fixed interval. One full day* (*ahorātra*) *= 60 ghaṭikās, 1 ghaṭikā = 24 minutes, 1 ghaṭikā = 60 vināḍīs* (*breath-units*).

आर्द्धेन्दुप्रतिमं च कुन्दधवलं कण्ठेऽम्बुतत्त्वं स्थितं
तत्पीयूषवकारबीजसहितं युक्तं सदा विष्णुना।
प्राण तत्र विलीय पञ्चघटिकाष्चित्तानिवितं धारये
देषा दुःसहकालकूटदहनी स्याद्वारुणी धारणा॥१५९॥

ārddhendupratimaṁ ca kundadhavalaṁ kaṇṭhe'mbutattvaṁ sthitaṁ
tatpīyūṣavakārabījasahitaṁ yuktaṁ sadā viṣṇunā ।
prāṇa tatra vilīya pañcaghaṭikāṣcittānivitaṁ dhāraye
deṣā duḥsahakālakūṭadahanī syādvāruṇī dhāraṇā ॥ 159 ॥

159. The water element (ambu-tattva), located in the throat, is like a half-moon in shape, white as jasmine. It is always united with Viṣṇu, and marked by nectar and the seed-letter va. Into that, one should dissolve the vital breaths and sustain them there, with focused mind, for five ghaṭikās. This vāruṇī (watery) concentration grants such steadiness that even the unbearable fire of Kālakūṭa (poison) is neutralised.

यत्तालुस्थितमिन्द्रगोपसदृशं तत्त्वं त्रिकोणं ज्वलम्
तेजोरेफ़युक्तं प्रवालरुचिरं रुद्रेण यत्सङ्गतम्।
प्राणं तत्र विलीय पञ्चघटिकाश्चित्तान्वितं धारये
देषा वह्निजयं सदाविदधती वैश्वानरी धारणा॥१६०॥

yattālusthitamindragopasadṛśaṁ tattvaṁ trikoṇaṁ jvalam
tejorefayuktaṁ pravālaruciraṁ rudreṇa yatsaṅgatam ।
prāṇaṁ tatra vilīya pañcaghaṭikāścittānvitaṁ dhāraye
deṣā vahnijayaṁ sadāvidadhatī vaiśvānarī dhāraṇā ॥ 160 ॥

160. That triangular blazing principle, stationed at the palate and resembling an indragopa[1] insect possessed of fiery brilliance and subtle vibration, radiant like coral, and united with Rudra, into that, one should dissolve the breath and, with consciousness joined, sustain it for the duration of five ghaṭikās.[2] This is the Vaiśvānara Dhāraṇā,[3] which always bestows conquest over fire.

1. The firefly, Indragopa (इन्द्रगोप) → इन्द्र *"Indra, the king of the gods, associated with thunder, rain, and visionary brilliance"* + गो (*go*) *"light, ray"* + प (*pa*) *"to drink, nourish, protect." In other words, "to drink* (*in light through the eyes*)*, to be nourished and protected by the light of Indra," this practice is called jyoti-dhyāna* (ज्योतिध्यान) *"meditation on the inner light."*

2. Five ghaṭikās = 2 hours, or 300 vināḍīs (*breath-units*).

3. Derived from the compound viśva (*विश्व*) *meaning "all" or "universal" and nara* (*नर*) *meaning "man" or "person", Vaiśvānara literally means "the universal man" or "he who belongs to all men". Vaiśvānara is an epithet of Agni, the fire deity, especially in his cosmic or universal aspect. He is invoked as the fire that belongs to all people, the one who pervades all beings, the all-consuming flame, he is visualised as having a cosmic body: the heavens as his head, the sun as his eyes, air as his breath, fire as his heart, and the earth as his feet. In the context of yogic psychology, Vaiśvānara represents the waking state of consciousness* (*jāgrat-avasthā*) *as well as the digestive fire* (*jaṭharāgni*) *in the individual being. It is the universal aspect of the individual self that digests and assimilates both food and experience* (*i.e., light*)*. Dhāraṇā* (*धारणा*) *is concentration, the sixth limb of yoga. It means holding the mind steadily on a single object. Here, that object is the inner light or the flame of consciousness, approached through meditative absorption in Vaiśvānara Dhāraṇā.*

यद् भिन्नाञ्जनपुञ्जसन्निभमिदं वृतं भ्रुवोरन्तरे
तत्त्वं वायुमयं यकारसहितं तत्रेश्वरो देवता।
प्राणं तत्रविलीय पञ्चघटिकं चित्तान्वितं धारये
देषा रवे गमनं करोति यमिनां वै वायवी धारणा॥१६१॥

yad bhinnāñjanapuñjasannibhamidaṁ vṛtaṁ bhruvorantare
tattvaṁ vāyumayaṁ yakārasahitaṁ tatreśvaro devatā ।
prāṇaṁ tatravilīya pañcaghaṭikaṁ cittānvitaṁ dhāraye
deṣā rave gamanaṁ karoti yamināṁ vai vāyavī dhāraṇā ॥ 161 ॥

161. That which appears like a broken mass of collyrium (soot-black) and is concealed between the eyebrows, this is the principle composed of air (vāyu) along with the syllable ya.[1] The presiding deity there is the Lord (Īśvara).[2] One should dissolve the breath into that place and, along with the mind, hold it steadily for a duration of five ghaṭikās (2 hours). Through this, the practice of the air-based (vāyavī) dhāraṇā (concentration) brings about ascension (movement upward) in the self-restrained ones (yogins).[3]

1. The syllable "ya" (य) *represents the bīja* (*seed syllable*) *associated with yaṁ* (यं) *the air element* (*vāyu-tattva*) *in yogic and tantric traditions.*

2. ईश्वर (*īśvara*) → ईश् (*īś*) + व (*va*) + र (*ra*) *"Master of the air* (*breath*) *possessing the motion of amorous* (*love*) *play* (*which*) *gives bright* (*shining*) *splendour* (*of the great light*)."

3. Who has subdued his senses, having self-possession, governs or controls himself.

आकाशं सुविशुद्धवारिसदृशं यद् ब्रह्मरन्ध्रे स्थितं
यन्नाथेन सदाशिवेन सहितं शान्तं हकाराक्षरम्।
प्राणं तत्र विलीया पञ्चघटीकं चित्तन्वितं धारये
देषा मोक्षकपाटपाटनपतुः प्रोक्ता नभोधारणा॥१६२॥

ākāśaṁ suviśuddhavārisadṛśaṁ yad brahmarandhre sthitaṁ
yannāthena sadāśivena sahitaṁ śāntaṁ hakārākṣaram ।
prāṇaṁ tatra vilīyā pañcaghaṭīkaṁ cittanvitaṁ dhāraye
deṣā mokṣakapāṭapāṭanapatuḥ proktā nabhodhāraṇā ॥ 162 ॥

162. That ākāśa, resembling supremely pure water (soma), which is situated in the Brahmarandhra; that which, united with the Lord Sadāśiva,[1] is the peaceful syllable ha,[2] there, one should dissolve the breath, and maintain it for five ghaṭikās (two hours), infused with consciousness. This is said to be nabho-dhāraṇā (the concentration on ether), and the one who practises it becomes adept at opening the gate to liberation.

1. Sadāśiva (सदाशिव) *worshipped as a liṅga and meditated upon in the transcendent form of effulgence.*

2. The phoneme ha (ह) *representing "inhalation" while cultivating awareness of the immanence of Śakti.*

स्तम्भिनी द्राविणी चैव दाहिनी भ्रामिणी तथा।
शोषिणी च भवात्येषा भूतानां पञ्च धारणाः॥१६३॥

stambhinī drāviṇī caiva dāhinī bhrāmiṇī tathā ।
śoṣiṇī ca bhavātyeṣā bhūtānāṁ pañca dhāraṇāḥ ॥ 163 ॥

163. Stambhinī [1] (she who immobilises), Drāviṇī [2] (she who melts and flows), Dāhinī [3] (she who burns), Bhrāmiṇī [4] (the one that causes whirling), and Śoṣiṇī [5] (the one who dries, withers and destroys), these are said to be the five dhāraṇās (concentration techniques) associated with the elements (bhūtānāṁ).

1. स्तम्भिनी (*stambhinī*)*:* स्तम् (*stam*)*: "to stop", "to be motionless"* + भि (*bhi*) *from the root √ bhī, "to strike", "to block"* + नी (*nī*) *feminine suffix implying agency → "she who immobilises." Element: Pṛthivī* (*Earth*).

2. द्राविणी (*drāviṇī*)*: from root drāv, "to melt", "to flow" +* णी (*ṇī*) *feminine suffix implying agency → "she who melts and flows." Element: Āpas* (*Water*).

3. दाहिनी (*dāhinī*)*:* दाहि (*dāhi*) *from the root √ dah, "to burn" +* नी (*nī*) *feminine agentive suffix → "she who burns." Element: Tejas / Agni* (*Fire*).

4. भ्रामिणी (*bhrāmiṇī*)*:* भ्रामि (*bhrāmi*) *from the root √ bhram, "to whirl", "to rotate" +* णी (*ṇī*) *agentive suffix → "the one that causes whirling." Element: Vāyu* (*Air*).

5. शोषिणी (*śoṣiṇī*)*: from the root√ śuṣ, "to dry", "to wither", "destroy" +* णी (*ṇī*) *agentive suffix → "the one who dries, withers and destroys." Element: Ākāśa* (*Ether/Space*).

The evolution of elements begins with ākāśa, and in reverse order, dissolution returns back into ākāśa. In withdrawal (*pratyāhāra*) *and laya* (*dissolution*)*, all sensory and elemental experience ultimately collapses into the void of ākāśa:*

ākāśa (आकाश) → *आ* (*ā*) + *का* (*kā*) + *श* (*śa*)

Ākāśa (आकाश): *To "fully pervade towards* (*and enter*) *the difficult to attain narrow passage through the* (*shining*) *water* (*which unfolds and opens*)*, laying down* (*the physical body*)*, to subdue and conquer* (*death's*) *shining light."*

कर्मणा मनसा वाचा धारणाः पञ्च दुर्लभाः।
विज्ञान सततं योगी सर्वदुःखैः प्रमुच्यते॥१६४॥

karmaṇā manasā vācā dhāraṇāḥ pañca durlabhāḥ ।
vijñāna satataṁ yogī sarvaduḥkhaiḥ pramucyate ॥ 164 ॥

164. By action, by mind, and by speech, the five concentrations (dhāraṇās) are difficult to attain; But the yogī who is constantly abiding in nothing but consciousness (vijñāna) becomes liberated from all suffering.

सर्वं चिन्तासमावर्ति योगिनो हृदि वर्तते।
या तत्वे निश्चला चिन्ता तद्धि ध्यानं प्रचक्षते॥१६५॥

sarvaṁ cintāsamāvarti yogino hṛdi vartate ।
yā tatve niścalā cintā taddhi dhyānaṁ pracakṣate ॥ 165 ॥

165. All mental activity takes place in the heart[1] of the yogin.[2] That reflection which is unmoving and grounded in truth, that indeed is called meditation.

1. अन्तःकरण (*antaḥkaraṇa*)*, the "inner instrument", the subtle seat of consciousness in Indian philosophical psychology. It is traditionally described as a fourfold internal apparatus: manas, the mind, coordinator and doubter, which processes and channels sense-data; buddhi, the intellect, the determinative and discriminative faculty; ahaṃkāra, the ego-principle, the "I"-maker; and citta, the repository of mental impressions* (*saṁskāra*)*, the reflective field of awareness.*

2. Viṣṇu in reply to the sage Nārada:

यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येऽस्य हृदि स्थिताः।
तदामृतत्वमश्नुते जीवन्मुक्तः स संशयः॥

yadā sarve pramucyante kāmā ye'sya hṛdi sthitāḥ |
tadāmṛtatvam aśnute jīvanmuktaḥ sa sanśayaḥ ||

When all the desires that dwell in the heart are cast off entirely, then the mortal becomes immortal; he attains Brahman even while living, there is no doubt about it.

- Garuḍa Purāṇa

द्विधा भवति तद् ध्यानं सगुणं निर्गुणं तथा।
सगुणं वर्णभेदेन निर्गुणं केवल विदुः॥१६६॥

dvidhā bhavati tad dhyānaṁ saguṇaṁ nirguṇaṁ tathā ।
saguṇaṁ varṇaṁbhedena nirguṇaṁ kevala viduḥ ॥ 166 ॥

166. That meditation becomes two-fold: with attributes (saguṇa) and without attributes (nirguṇa). Meditation with attributes is based on variation in sound (varṇa), while the attributeless is known as the absolute alone (kevala).[1]

1. Saguṇa meditation = The mental repetition of the mantra of the breath during prāṇāyāma. Nirguṇa meditation = Kevala-kumbhaka (spontaneous cessation of the breath), one who is beyond natural and modified prāṇāyāma.

Kevala (केवल): *That which alone remains, nothing but pure undivided eternal consciousness. Kevala is omniscience, the ability of the soul to grasp everything everywhere relating to past, present and future all at once. It is achieved only when all possible varieties of karmas have been totally destroyed so that total purity is reached in the breathless state.*

अश्वमेध्सहस्राणि वाजपेयशतानि च।
एकस्य ध्यानयोगस्य कलां नार्हन्ति षोडशीम्॥१६७॥

aśvamedhsahasrāṇi vājapeyaśatāni ca ।
ekasya dhyānayogasya kalāṁ nārhanti ṣoḍaśīm ॥ 167 ॥

167. A thousand horse sacrifices (aśvamedha) and a hundred vājapeya[1] rituals do not equal even one sixteenth[2] part of a single moment of true meditation (dhyāna-yoga).[3]

1. The Vājapeya ritual is a royal Soma sacrifice (involving pressing and drinking of the soma plant juice).

2. In Nāth tantric doctrine, the "sixteenth part" (ṣoḍaśī-kalā) is the full moon (pūrṇimā), the perfected, unwaning phase of the lunar principle (candra) in the sahasrāra cakra. This full moon, the sixteenth kalā, symbolises the state in which the bindu at the crown (sahasrāra) is completely filled with amṛta, the nectar of immortality.

3. Dhyāna-yoga refers here to samādhi, the undivided union with pure consciousness (kevala), in which the yogin transcends thought, sound, and breath, and abides in omniscient awareness beyond all attributes (nirguṇa).

आधारे प्रथमे चक्रे स्वर्णाभे च चतुरङ्गुले।
नासाग्रदृष्टिरात्मानां ध्यात्वा योगी सुखी भवेत्॥१६८॥

ādhāre prathame cakre svarṇābhe ca caturaṅgule ।
nāsāgradṛṣṭirātmānāṁ dhyātvā yogī sukhī bhavet ॥ 168 ॥

168. Placing his attention in the support, the first wheel (chakra),[1] shining like gold and four fingers in extent, with the gaze fixed at the tip of the nose, the yogin, meditating on the Ātman, becomes blissful.

1. Mūlādhāra chakra.

स्वाधिष्ठाने शुभे चक्रे सन्माणिक्यसमप्रभे।
नासाग्रदृष्टिरात्मानं ध्यात्वा ब्रह्मसमो भवेत्॥१६९॥

svādhiṣṭhāne śubhe cakre sanmāṇikyasamaprabhe ।
nāsāgradṛṣṭirātmānaṁ dhyātvā brahmasamo bhavet ॥ 169 ॥

169. In the auspicious wheel (chakra) of svādhiṣṭhāna, sparkling[1] forth like a fine ruby, with gaze fixed at the tip of the nose, meditating on the Ātman, the yogin becomes equal to Brahman.

1. Prabhā (प्रभा) → *pra* (प्र) *"forward, onward, forth, away" + bha* (भ) *"light, radiance, a ray of light," i.e, "sparkling."*

तरुणादित्यसंकाशे चक्रे तु मणिपूरके।
नासाग्रदृष्टिरात्मानं ध्यात्वा संक्षोभयेज्जगत्॥१७०॥

taruṇādityasaṁkāśe cakre tu maṇipūrake ।
nāsāgradṛṣṭirātmānaṁ dhyātvā saṁkṣobhayeḏjjagat ॥ 170 ॥

170. In the maṇipūra chakra, shining like a young sun,[1] with the gaze fixed at the tip of the nose, the yogin, meditating on the Ātman, may shake the entire universe.[2]

1. Like the first light of the rising sun, the emerging non-dual awareness (Ātman), luminous but still unfolding.

2. The universal axis, the suṣumṇā nāḍī, the pathway of kuṇḍalinī śakti (which moves rapidly up and down the spine).

अनाहते महाचक्र द्वादशारे च पन्कजे।
नासाग्रे दृष्टिमाधाय ध्यात्वा ध्यातामरो भवेत्॥१७१॥

anāhate mahācakrae dvādaśāre ca pankaje ।
nāsāgre dṛṣṭimādhāya dhyātvā dhyātāmaro bhavet ॥ 171 ॥

171. In the anāhata, the great chakra, in the lotus of twelve petals, having fixing the gaze at the tip of the nose, the yogin, meditating on the object of meditation,[1] becomes immortal.

1. The object of meditation is the sun of non-dual awareness (Ātman), the unchanging, luminous Self that arises in the heart as the inner light beyond sound and form.

सततं घण्टिकामध्ये विशुद्धे दीपकप्रभे।
नासाग्रदृष्टिरात्मानं ध्यात्वा दुःखं विमुञ्चति॥१७२॥

satataṁ ghaṇiṭakāmadhye viśuddhe dīpakaprabhe ।
nāsāgradṛṣṭirātmānaṁ dhyātvā duḥkhaṁ vimuñcati ॥ 172 ॥

172. Constantly meditating within the viśuddha chakra, resounding like a bell [1] and shining like a lamp, with gaze fixed at the tip of the nose, the yogin, meditating on the Ātman, is freed from sorrow.

1. *Ghaṇṭānāda* (घण्टानाद): *The third sound heard in* ***नादानुसन्धान*** *(nādānusandhāna), resembling the ringing of a large bell (from high above). It arises within the viśuddha chakra, where space (ākāśa) and subtle vibration (nāda) dominate.*

स्रवत्पीयूषसम्पूर्णे लम्बिकाचन्द्रमण्ड्दले।
नासाग्रदृष्टिरात्मानं ध्यात्वा मृत्युं विमुञ्चति॥१७३॥

sravatpīyūṣasampūrṇe lambikācandramaṇṇdale ।
nāsāgradṛṣṭirātmānaṁ dhyātvā mṛtyuṁ vimuñcati ॥ 173 ॥

173. In the lunar sphere of the Lambikā,[1] which is completely filled with the nectar-like essence flowing (from above), one who contemplates the Ātman while keeping the gaze fixed at the tip of the nose, abandons[2] death.

1. The upper soft palate above the uvula, located within the nasopharyngeal region.

2. Vimuñcati (विमुञ्चति) *"releases, abandons, is freed from" death, in this context, also means "relinquishing" (sense objects).*

ध्यायन्नीलनिभं नित्यं भ्रूरमध्ये परमेश्वरम्।
आत्मानं विजितप्राणो योगी योगमवाप्नुयात्॥१७४॥

dhyāyannīlanibhaṁ nityaṁ bhūramadhye parameśvaram ।
ātmānaṁ vijitaprāṇo yogī yogamavāpnuyāt ॥ 174 ॥

174. Constantly meditating on the Supreme Lord, who appears like a deep blue radiance[1] and resides in the centre of the earth-element, the yogī, having mastered his life-force attains union (yoga) with the Ātman.

1. Within the shining blue waters of the upside-down well in the sky.

ब्रह्मरन्ध्रे महाचक्रे सहस्रारे च पन्कजे।
नासाग्रदृष्टिरात्मानं ध्यात्वा सिद्धो भवेत्स्वयम्॥१७५॥

brahmarandhre mahācakre sahasrāre ca pankaje ।
nāsāgradṛṣṭirātmānaṁ dhyātvā siddho bhavetsvayam ॥ 175 ॥

175. By fixing the gaze at the tip of the nose and meditating upon the Ātman in the great energy centre, in the thousand-petalled lotus at the crown of the head, one becomes perfected by one's own effort.

निर्मलं गगनाकारं मरीचिजलसन्निभम्।
आत्मानं सर्वगंध्यात्वा योगी मुक्तिमवाप्नुयात्॥१७६॥

nirmalaṁ gaganākāraṁ marīcijalasannibham ।
ātmānaṁ sarvagaṁdhyātvā yogī muktimavāpnuyāt ॥ 176 ॥

176. By meditating upon the Ātman[1] as pure, sky-like, and resembling water illumined by rays of light,[2] pervading all things, the yogin attains liberation.

1. To fully pervade towards and enter the difficult to attain narrow passage through the shining water which unfolds and opens, laying down the physical body, to enter death's shining light.

2. The liberation of one's lucid consciousness, in the vehicle of the light body, being impelled into, and passing through the axle hole of the rotating wheel of time (kālacakra), having a connection and linkage with the supreme soul (mokṣa bhava), within the cavity of Brahmā, to perceive the light of samādhi within the upside-down well in the sky, the hiraṇya-garbhá, the "shining waters of the womb of all creation".

गुदं मेढ्रश्च नाभिश्च हृदयं कण्ठ ऊर्ध्वगः।
घण्टिका लंबिकास्थानं भ्रूमध्यं च नभोबिलम्॥१७७॥

gudaṁ meḍhraśca nābhiśca hṛdayaṁ kaṇṭha ūrdhvagaḥ ।
ghaṇṭikā laṁbikāsthānaṁ bhrūmadhyaṁ ca nabhobilam ॥ 177 ॥

177. The ascending path includes: the anus,[1] the genitals,[2] the navel,[3] the heart, the throat, the uvula,[4] the site of the laṁbikā (uvula's root)[5], the space between the eyebrows,[6] and the sky-cavity.[7]

*1. More specifically, this refers to the yoni-sthāna (the womb of energy), located mid-way between the anus and the genitals at the perineum; also known as the Kaulagranthi (*कौलग्रन्थि*), "the knot of Kaula."*

2. The term मेढ्र *(meḍhra) in this context typically refers to the base of the phallus, near its root, where the urethra, spermatic ducts, and subtle energy pathways (nāḍīs) are said to converge.*

*3. Located approximately 3–4 finger-widths (aṅgulas) behind the surface of the navel, in the central axis of the body (slightly below the horizontal plane of the navel). Also known as Nābhi-sthāna (*नाभि-स्थान*), the "place of the navel," Maṇipūra-cakra (*मणिपूर-चक्र*), the "city of jewels," or Nābhi-kanda (*नाभि-कन्द*),* the "navel bulb."

4. घण्टिका *(ghaṇṭikā), the "little bell," the pendulous soft tissue hanging from the soft palate at the back of the mouth.*

5. लम्बिकास्थानम् *(laṁbikāsthānam), The root/base of the uvula, i.e., the point where the uvula connects to the posterior soft palate (at the junction of the oral cavity and the nasopharynx). The site where amṛta (the nectar of immortality) from the cranial cavity drips downward, unless sealed by the tongue through khecarī-mudrā.*

6. भ्रूमध्यम् *(bhrūmadhyam), "between the eyebrows"; the Ājñā-cakra is located at the centre of the brain, directly behind this point. Anatomically, it lies behind the forehead, anterior to the pituitary gland (hypophysis), slightly above and behind the root of the nose, following a trajectory inward through the sphenoid bone. It corresponds to the midline of the brain, approaching the cavernous sinus region and the sella turcica, which houses the pituitary body.*

7. नभोबिलम् *(nabhobilam), "sky-opening," "etheric cavity," or "cranial hollow"; the gateway to the infinite. It is regarded as the final internal opening before the ascent of prāṇa into the infinite, or the dissolution into pure consciousness. This inner cranial cavity, located at the top of the head, corresponding to the Sahasrāra-cakra (though not identical to the cakra itself), is considered the source or reservoir of amṛta (divine nectar), which may descend (and be lost) unless sealed at the laṁbikāsthāna through khecarī-mudrā. The* बिन्दुविसर्ग *(bindu-visarga) "drop and release" or "point and emission," is a subtle centre located near the crown, is said to be a point of origin, or creation of amṛta, feeding the cranial cup below.*

This is conceived in classical tantra and yoga as the inner cup that receives the nectar of immortality (amṛta). This cavity, situated at the top of the head, just beneath or within the sahasrāra region is metaphorically described as the सिंहपात्रम् *(siṁhapatram, "lion's cup"), the* शशाङ्ककुण्ड *(śaśāṅka-kuṇḍa, "moon-pool"), or the etheric space* खव्यूह *(kha-vyūha), which is the activated inner etheric field in which amṛta collects. The source of this nectar is the* बिन्दु *(bindu, "drop") or the* चन्द्रकला *(candrakalā, "digit of the moon"), from which it descends. These terms together symbolise the yogin's inner vessel of transcendence, accessed through subtle practices such as khecarī-mudrā and śāmbhavī-mudrā.*

This inner vessel of transcendence, the hidden source from which the nectar of immortality is drunk, and by which union with the divine is inwardly realised, may also be likened to the Holy Grail of Christianity, the cup of Christ.

Similarly, in tantric practice, the skull cup कपालपात्र *(kapāla-pātra) symbolises the vessel of awakened consciousness from which the nectar of immortality (amṛta) is inwardly consumed. It represents the inner receptacle of non-dual realisation, where death is transcended and from which the yogin drinks* रस *(rasa), the "nectar" of liberation.*

कथितानि नवैतानि ध्यानस्थानानि योगिनाम्।

उपाधितत्वमुक्तानां कुर्वन्त्यष्टगुणोदयम्॥१७८॥

kathitāni navaitāni dhyānasthānāni yoginām ।
upādhitatvamuktānāṁ kurvantyaṣṭaguṇodayam ॥ 178 ॥

178. These nine meditation seats of the yogins,[1] as described, bring about the emergence of the eightfold powers in those who are free from limiting conditions.[2]

1. The nine meditation seats (dhyānasthānas) are traditional objects or stages of yogic focus: inner sound (nāda), subtle point (bindu), time as the force of change, decay, and death (kāla), the subtle creative power or facet of nature, associated with the unfolding of consciousness and energy (kalā), the fundamental elements or principles of existence (tattva), the inner self or pure consciousness, distinct from all material components (puruṣa), the experience of emptiness or voidness when all mental and sensory activity ceases (śūnya), what lies beyond emptiness, the state of undivided, self-luminous consciousness (śūnyātīta), and the absolute reality (parabrahman). They reflect a gradual deepening of meditation from subtle forms to the formless.

In the Nātha tradition, śūnyātīta refers to the state beyond meditative emptiness (śūnya), in which even the experience of voidness dissolves. It is the realisation of pure, non-dual consciousness, puruṣa or parabrahman, beyond mind, form, and formlessness.

2. Limiting conditions (Sanskrit: upādhi) refer to superimposed attributes that obscure or constrain the true nature of the Self (Ātman). These include identification with the body (śarīra), mind (manas), ego (ahaṅkāra), intellect (buddhi), life-force (prāṇa), and the causal body (kāraṇa-śarīra). Though not intrinsic to the Self, these conditions create the illusion of individuality and separation. Freedom from upādhis is essential for the yogin to realise pure consciousness and attain higher yogic powers (aṣṭaguṇas).

उपाधिश्च तथा तत्त्वं द्वयमेतदुदाहृतम्।
उपाधिः प्रोच्यते वर्णस्तत्वमात्माभिधीयते॥१७९॥

upādhiśca tathā tattvaṁ dvayametadudāhṛtam ।
upādhiḥ procyate varṇastatvamātmābhidhīyate ॥ 179 ॥

179. Both upādhi and tattva are here presented as two distinct categories: upādhi (the "limiting adjunct") is said to be varṇa[1] (the "outer characteristic, form"), while tattva (the "principal essence of consciousness") is referred to as the Self (Ātman).[2]

1. What is seen or perceived externally, the illusory covering.

2. Tattva in this verse refers to the principal essence of consciousness, the true Self (Ātman), which is unchanging and self-luminous, underlying all appearances and distinct from imposed characteristics (upādhis) such as name, form, or social identity. It is the fundamental, unconditioned essence, the undivided light of pure consciousness; as pure awareness, the ātman or puruṣa that is self-revealing and beyond all attributes.

उपाधेरन्यथा ज्ञान तत्वसंस्थितिरन्यथा।
अन्यथ वर्णयोगेन दृश्यते स्फटिकपमम्॥१८०॥

upādheranyathā jñāna tatvasaṁsthitiranyathā ।
anyatha varṇayogena dṛśyate sphaṭikopamam ॥ 180 ॥

180. Knowledge based on the limiting adjunct (upādhi) is one thing; the state grounded in essential reality (tattva) is another. Due to association with outer characteristics (varṇa), the Self appears otherwise, like a crystal[1] coloured by what it rests upon.

1. *Sphaṭikā* (स्फटिका): *a quartz crystal of a superior quality* (*exceptionally transparent, without inclusions*). *The crystal metaphor* (*sphaṭikopama*) *illustrates how the pure Self, like a colourless crystal, appears modified due to association with external attributes* (*varṇa*) *imposed by upādhi. Though the crystal remains unchanged, it seems coloured by what lies near it. Similarly, the Self appears altered when perceived through the lens of limiting adjuncts, though its true nature remains untouched, pure, clear consciousness* (*Ātman*).

समस्तोपधिविध्वंसात्सदाभ्यासेन योगिनः।
मुक्तिकृच्छक्तिभेदेन स्वयमात्मा प्रकाशते॥१८१॥

samastopadhividhvaṁsātsadābhyāsena yoginaḥ ।
muktikṛcchaktibhedena svayamātmā prakāśate ॥ 181 ॥

181. Through the complete dissolution of all limiting adjuncts (upādhis), by the yogin's sustained and intense practice (abhyāsa), and through the differentiation[1] of the power (śakti) that brings about liberation, the Self (Ātman) shines forth, revealing itself by its own nature.

1. By discerning the difference in how power (*śakti*) *operates: either as a force of delusion* (*binding*) *or as a force of revelation* (*liberating*), *the yogin is led to self-realisation.*

विरजाः परमाकशादात्माकाशो महत्तरः।
सर्वंदेत्थ भावनया तत्वं योगिजना विदुः॥१८२॥

virajāḥ paramākaśādātmākāśo mahattaraḥ ।
sarvaṁdettha bhāvanayā tatvaṁ yogijanā viduḥ ॥ 182 ॥

182. The pure (Self), greater than the supreme ether (ākāśa), is the Self-ether; through contemplation, the yogis realise this truth to be all that exists herein.[1]

1. This verse declares that the pure Self (*virajāḥ*), *free from all impurity or passion* (*rajas*), *is greater than even the supreme ether* (*paramākāśa*), *which represents the subtlest element in classical cosmology. The term ātmākāśaḥ* (*"Self-ether"*) *refers to the inner space of pure consciousness, subtler and more pervasive than cosmic space.*

Through contemplation (*bhāvanā*), *the yogis come to realise that this Self-ether is the true essence* (*tattvaṁ*) *of all that exists here. In other words, the entire phenomenal world is known to be non-different from the Self, not merely intellectually, but through direct meditative insight.*

The verse expresses a non-dual vision: all existence is grounded in the pure, infinite consciousness that is the Self, greater than all phenomena, even the highest principle of space.

एतद् ब्रह्मात्मकं तेजः शिवं ज्योतिरनुत्तमम्॥
ध्वात्वा ज्ञात्वा विमुक्तः स्यादिति गोरक्षभाषितम्॥१८३॥

etad brahmātmakaṁ tejaḥ śivaṁ jyotiranuttamam ॥
dhvātvā jñātvā vimuktaḥ syāditi gorakṣabhāṣitam ॥ 183 ॥

183. This is the nature of Brahman, the radiant power (of Śiva), the auspicious, supreme light. Having purified and realised it, one becomes liberated, so speaks Gorakṣa.

शब्दादीनां च तन्मात्रा यावत्कर्णादिषु स्थिताः।
तावदेव स्मृतं ध्यानं समाधिः प्राणसंयमात्॥१८४॥

śabdādīnāṁ ca tanmātrā yāvatkarṇādiṣu sthitāḥ ।
tāvadeva smṛtaṁ dhyānaṁ samādhiḥ prāṇasaṁyamāt ॥ 184 ॥

184. As long as the subtle elements (tanmātrās)[1] of sound and the like remain established in the senses such as the ear, that alone is remembered as meditation (dhyāna); absorption (samādhi) arises from restraint of the vital (energy of the) breath (prāṇa).[2]

1. *Tanmātra* (तन्मात्र): *the subtle, pre-material essences of the five great elements* (*mahābhūtas*), *each corresponding to a sensory quality that subtly manifest in the mind as sound* (*space*), *touch* (*air*), *form* (*fire*), *taste* (*water*) *and smell* (*earth*).

2. *This verse distinguishes dhyāna* (*meditation*) *from samādhi* (*absorption*) *by referring to the role of the tanmātrās, the subtle essences of the sensory elements* (*sound, touch, form, taste, smell*). *As long as these remain active within the senses and mind* (*e.g., subtle impressions of sound in the ear*), *the practitioner is still engaged in dhyāna, where subtle sensory content persists.*

Samādhi, however, is said to arise only through prāṇasaṁyama, the restraint of vital breath, which leads to the dissolution of all sensory impressions, gross and subtle. Thus, dhyāna is marked by inward focus with subtle content, while samādhi signifies the complete cessation of even that subtle engagement, resulting in undistracted, non-dual awareness.

This reflects the classical yogic understanding that prāṇa and mind move together, and true absorption is only possible when prāṇa is fully stilled, thereby stilling the senses and tanmātrās.

धारण पञ्चनाडीभिर्ध्यानं स्यत् षष्टिनाडीभिः।
दिनद्वादशकेनैव समाधिः प्राणसंयमात्॥१८५॥

dhāraṇa pañcanāḍībhirdhyānaṁ syat ṣaṣṭināḍībhiḥ ।
dinadvādaśakenaiva samādhiḥ prāṇasaṁyamāt ॥ 185 ॥

185. Dhāraṇā is with five nāḍīs (~2 hrs); dhyāna is with sixty nāḍīs (1 day).[1]

Through a period of twelve days alone, samādhi arises from the restraint of prāṇa.[2]

1. A nāḍī (नाडी) *here denotes a traditional time unit: 60 nāḍīs = 1 day-and-night, hence 1 nāḍī = 24 minutes. Accordingly, 5 nāḍīs ≈ 2 hours* (*dhāraṇā*)*, 60 nāḍīs = 24 hours* (*dhyāna*)*, and twelve such days mark the threshold to samādhi.*

2. Prāṇasaṃyama (प्राणसंयम) *volitional, controlled suspension of breath, kumbhaka* (कुम्भक)*, which, sustained for twelve days, culminates in kevalakumbhaka* (केवलकुम्भक) *"spontaneous breath retention."*

यत्समत्वं द्वयोरत्र जीवात्मपरमात्मनोः
समस्तनष्टसंकल्पः समाधि सोऽभिधीयते॥१८६॥

yatsamatvaṁ dvayoratra jīvātmaparamātmanoḥ
samastanaṣṭasaṁkalpaḥ samādhi so'bhidhīyate ॥ 186 ॥

186. That state in which there is sameness between the individual soul (jīvātman) and the Supreme Soul (paramātman), and in which all mental constructions have been completely dissolved, this is referred to as samādhi.

अंबुसैंधवयोरैक्यं यथा भवति योगतः।
तथात्ममनसोरैक्यं समाधिरभिधीयते॥१८७॥

aṁbusaiṁdhavayoraikyaṁ yathā bhavati yogataḥ ।
tathātmamanasoraikyaṁ samādhirabhidhīyate ॥ 187 ॥

187. Just as the union of water and salt occurs through merging together, in the same way, the unity of the self (Ātman) and the mind (manas) is referred to as samādhi.[1]

1. Just as salt dissolves completely into water, losing its separate identity, so in samādhi, the mind merges into the Ātman, its individuality dissolving into pure awareness without distinction.

यदा संलीयते जीवो मानसं च विलीयते।
तदा समरसत्वं हि समाधिरभिधीयते॥१८८॥

yadā saṁlīyate jīvo mānasaṁ ca vilīyate ।
tadā samarasatvaṁ hi samādhirabhidhīyate ॥ 188 ॥

188. When the individual soul dissolves, and the mental activity is also absorbed, then that state of complete sameness (samarasatva) is truly called samādhi.

इन्द्रियेषु मनोवृत्तिरपरा प्रक्रिया हि सा।

ऊर्ध्वमेव गते जीवे न मनो नेन्द्रियाणि च १८९॥

indriyeṣu manovṛttiraparā prakriyā hi sā ।
ūrdhvameva gate jīve na mano nendriyāṇi ca ॥ 189 ॥

189. Mental activity directed towards the senses is merely an inferior process. But when the jīva (spirit)[1] ascends upwards, then neither the mind nor the senses remain active.

1. Here, जीव (*jīva*) *"spirit", is the energy of the "breath".*

नाभिजानाति शीतोष्ण न दुःखं न सुखं तथा।
न मानं नापमानं च योगी युक्तः समाधिना॥१९०॥

nābhijānāti śītoṣṇa na duḥkhaṁ na sukhaṁ tathā ।
na mānaṁ nāpamānaṁ ca yogī yuktaḥ samādhinā ॥ 190 ॥

190. The yogin established in samādhi is not aware of cold or heat, nor of pain or pleasure, and similarly, neither of honour nor dishonour.

न गन्धं न रसं रूपं न च स्पर्शं न निःस्वनम्।
नात्मानं न परं वेत्ति योगी युक्तः समधिना॥१९१॥

na gandhaṁ na rasaṁ rūpaṁ na ca sparśaṁ na niḥsvanam ।
nātmānaṁ na paraṁ vetti yogī yuktaḥ samadhinā ॥ 191 ॥

191. The yogin absorbed in samādhi perceives neither smell, nor taste, nor form, nor touch, nor sound; he knows neither himself nor another.

अभेद्यः सर्वशस्त्राणाग्वध्यः सर्वदेहिनाम्।
अग्राह्यो मंत्रयंत्राणां योगी युक्तः समाधिना॥१९२॥

abhedyaḥ sarvaśastrāṇāgvadhyaḥ sarvadehinām ।
agrāhyo maṁtrayaṁtrāṇāṁ yogī yuktaḥ samādhinā ॥ 192 ॥

192. The yogin absorbed in samādhi is invulnerable to all weapons, cannot be slain by any embodied being, and is beyond the reach of all mantras and yantras.

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु।
युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुखहा॥१९३॥

yuktāhāravihārasya yuktaceṣṭasya karmasu।
yuktasvapnāvabodhasya yogo bhavati dukhahā ॥ 193 ॥

193. For one whose eating and pleasures are balanced, whose efforts or actions are disciplined and regulated, and whose sleeping and waking are well-balanced, yoga becomes a destroyer of sorrow.

निराद्यन्तं निरालम्बं निष्प्रपञ्चं निराश्रयम्।
निरामयं निराकारमचलं निर्गुणं महत्॥१९४॥

nirādyantaṁ nirālambaṁ niṣprapañcaṁ nirāśrayam ।
nirāmayaṁ nirākāramacalaṁ nirguṇaṁ mahat ॥ 194 ॥

194. That which has neither beginning nor end, which rests on nothing, is free from worldly manifestation and support, free from affliction, formless, immovable, devoid of qualities, that is the great principle primordial intelligence (mahat), the supreme reality.[1]

1. In the Nātha tradition, mahat (महत्), "the Great," is understood not merely as a metaphysical category but as a direct reference to the Supreme Principle (Paramatattva) realised through yogic experience. It transcends the tattva system entirely, being nirguṇa (without qualities), nirākāra (formless), and niṣprapañca (beyond manifestation). While Sāṅkhya identifies mahat with the first evolute of prakṛti, the Nāthas reinterpret it experientially: mahat is that which remains when all sensory operations, dualities, and supports are dissolved in samādhi. It is the unconditioned Reality, realised by the yogī yuktaḥ samādhinā, the yogin absorbed in samādhi, who becomes one with the avyakta (unmanifest), beyond mantra, yantra, or conceptual frameworks.

हेतुदृष्टान्तनिर्मुक्तः मनोबुद्ध्याद्यगोचरम्।
योगविज्ञानमानन्दं ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो विदुः॥१९५॥

hetudṛṣṭāntanirmuktaḥ manobuddhyādyagocaram ।
yogavijñānamānandaṁ brahma brahmavido viduḥ ॥ 195 ॥

195. That which is free from cause and analogy, beyond the reach of mind, intellect, and the like, brahman (the absolute reality) is known by the knowers of brahman as the bliss of yogic realisation.[1]

1. In the Nātha tradition, the first brahma is reality as it is, nirguṇa, nirākāra, experienced in nirvikalpa samādhi, beyond thought. The second brahma, as in brahmavid, points to the attained state of the yogin who has become one with that, no longer separate as knower and known. Thus, brahman is both the goal and the attainment, the object and the realiser, once duality is transcended through direct yogic realisation.

निरालम्बे निराधारे निराकारे निरामये।
योगी योगविधानेन परब्रह्मणि लीयते॥१९६॥

nirālambe nirādhāre nirākāre nirāmaye ।
yogī yogavidhānena parabrahmaṇi līyate ॥ 196 ॥

196. The yogin, following the path of yoga, dissolves into the supreme state of brahman, that which is without support, without foundation, without form, and free from all impurity.

यथा घृते घृतं क्षिप्तं घृतमेव हि जायते।
क्षीरे क्षीरं तथा योगी तत्त्वमेव स जायते॥१९७॥

yathā ghṛte ghṛtaṁ kṣiptaṁ ghṛtameva hi jāyate ।
kṣīre kṣīraṁ tathā yogī tattvameva sa jāyate॥ 197 ॥

197. Just as ghee, when poured into ghee, becomes nothing but ghee again; and as milk into milk remains only milk, in the same way, the yogin becomes one with non-dual, formless reality itself.

दुग्धे क्षीरं धृते सर्पिरग्नौ वह्निरिवार्पितः।
तन्मयत्वं व्रजत्येवं योगी लीनः परे पदे॥१९८॥

dugdhe kṣīraṁ dhṛte sarpiragnau vahnirivārpitaḥ ।
tanmayatvaṁ vrajatyevaṁ yogī līnaḥ pare pade ॥ 198 ॥

198. Just as milk in milk, ghee in ghee, or fire placed into fire loses its distinction, so too does the yogi, absorbed in the supreme state, attain complete identity with That.

भवभयदवमुक्तिं नाकसोपानमार्गं
प्रकटितपरमार्थं ग्रन्थमेनं सुगुह्यम्।
सकृदपि पठतीत्थं यः प्रशस्तप्रबोधं
स भवति भुवि मान्यो भाजनं मोक्षलक्षम्याः॥१९९॥

bhavabhayadavamuktiṁ nākasopānamārgaṁ
prakaṭitaparamārthaṁ granthamenaṁ suguhyam ।
sakṛdapi paṭhatīttthaṁ yaḥ praśastaprabodhaṁ
sa bhavati bhuvi mānyo bhājanaṁ mokṣalakṣamyāḥ ॥ 199 ॥

199. This most secret text, which reveals the highest truth, offers release from the wildfire[1] of the fear of worldly existence and serves as a stairway to heaven. Even one who reads it but once, if with noble understanding, becomes honoured in this world and a vessel of the grace of liberation.

1. All-consuming wildfire of the fear of inevitable death.

नृणां भवभयहरं मुक्तिसोपानलक्षणम्।
गुह्याद् गुह्यतरं चेदं गोरक्षेण प्रकाशितम्॥२००॥

nṛṇāṁ bhavabhayaharaṁ muktisopānalakṣaṇam ।
guhyād guhyataraṁ cedaṁ gorakṣeṇa prakāśitam ॥ 200 ॥

200. This teaching, more secret than the most secret,[1] has been revealed by Gorakṣa. It removes the fear of worldly existence for human beings and marks the stairway to liberation.

1. The "more secret" refers to teachings already reserved for advanced initiates, often guarded through symbolic language (sandhābhāṣā). Something more secret than that ("most secret") is considered incommunicable by words, it must be realised directly through yogic experience, particularly in samādhi. It is "most secret" because it lies beyond the mind and senses.

इति गोरक्षसनाथोक्तं योगशास्त्रं जनः पठेत्।
सर्वपापविनिर्मुक्तो योगी सिद्धो भवेद् ध्रुवम्॥२०१॥

iti gorakṣasanāthoktaṁ yogaśāstraṁ janaḥ paṭhet ।
sarvapāpavinirmukto yogī siddho bhaved dhruvam ॥ 201 ॥

201. Whoever studies this yogaśāstra spoken by Gorakṣanātha becomes completely freed from all sin and, without doubt, attains the perfection of a yogin.

योगशास्त्रं पठेन्नित्यं किमान्यैः शास्त्रविस्तरैः।
यत्स्वयं चादिनाथस्य निर्गतं वदनाम्बुजात्॥२०२॥

yogaśāstraṁ paṭhennityaṁ kimāanyaiḥ śāstravistaraiḥ ।
yatsvayaṁ cāadināthasya nirgataṁ vadanāmbujāt ॥ 202 ॥

202. One should read this Yogaśāstra daily, what need is there for other elaborate scriptures, when this has flowed directly from the lotus mouth of Ādinātha?

स्नातं तेन समस्ततीर्थसलिले दत्तां महीमण्डलम्
यज्ञानां च कृतं सहस्रमयुतं देवाश्च सम्पूजिताः।
सत्यं तेन सुतर्पिताश्च पितरः स्वर्गं च नीताः पुन
यस्य ब्रह्मविचारणे क्षणमपि प्राप्नोतिधैर्यं मनः॥२०३॥

snātaṁ tena samastatīrthasalile dattāṁ mahīmaṇḍalam
yajñānāṁ ca kṛtaṁ sahasramayutaṁ devāśca sampūjitāḥ ।

satyaṁ tena sutarpitāśca pitaraḥ svargaṁ ca nītāḥ puna
yasya brahmavicāraṇe kṣaṇamapi prāpnotidhairyaṁ manaḥ ॥ 203 ॥

203. One who, even for a moment, gains steadfastness of mind in contemplation upon Brahman, is as though he has bathed in all sacred waters, has donated the entire expanse of the Earth (as charity), has performed thousands upon tens of thousands of sacrifices, has worshipped the gods thoroughly, truly, has fully satisfied his ancestors, and has again been led to heaven.

॥इति श्रीमत्सिद्धवर्य श्रीगोरक्षनाथ विरचित विवेक मार्तण्डाभिधानं योगशास्त्रं सम्पूर्णम्॥

॥ iti śrīmatsiddhavarya śrīgorakṣanātha viracita viveka mārtaṇḍābhidhānaṁ yogaśāstraṁ sampūrṇam ॥

Thus ends the yoga scripture titled "Viveka Mārtaṇḍa" (the “Sun of Discernment”), composed by the venerable and accomplished sage Śrī Gorakṣanātha.

Sanskrit from the ITRANS encoding of the Viveka-mārtaṇḍa compiled by Śrī Yoga Nāth (2011).
This English translation and footnotes, by Śrī Maccidānanda Nātha (2025).